G. B. Eckles Family

1949

Mary Ann – 4-13-1938 Donna Belle – 3-1-1934 Doreen Elizabeth –1-5-1933

Dorothy Pauline Allen –12-22-1905 Milo Allen –2-13-1945 Gordon Bruce – 3-25-1907

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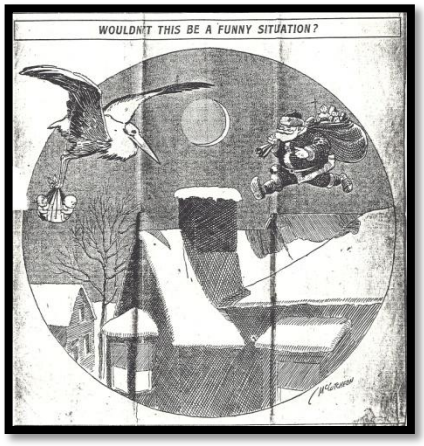
MOTHER AND DADDY

By Doreen and Mary

Daddy (**Gordon Bruce Eckles)** was born in Aplington, Iowa on March 25, 1907. He graduated from Aplington High School in 1925 where he became known as Bruce but the family always called him Gordon. He signed papers G.B. Eckles. He received a degree in Animal Husbandry from Iowa State College in 1929.[1]



Mother (**Dorothy Pauline Allen**)[2] was born on December 22, 1905 in Veo, Iowa. Her twin, Donald Paul (Bub), was born 5 minutes later.[3] John Allen, Grandpa Allen's brother, sent a cartoon with the following note on December 24, 1905. "Bro Willie: The *Chicago Tribune* heard about the twins and had their cartoonist prepare the enclosed cartoon especially for the occasion. Merry Christmas to you, in haste, your bro. John.

Mother graduated from Pleasant Plain High School[4] in 1925 and received a degree in Home Economics from Iowa State College in 1931.

After two years of college, Mother taught high school Home Economics in Lake Park, Iowa for two years to pay for the rest of her college. The Eckles family had more money than the Allens. Daddy was able to finish college in four years. When he graduated he farmed with his father, saving up money to buy adjacent land.

The folks were married at the Collegiate Presbyterian Church the day she graduated from college, June 15, 1931 so the families would not have to drive to Ames twice. In 1931 they moved into an old house on the hill west of Aplington (now #15692, Highway 57).[5]

The folks, especially Mother, were very frugal. Having been married during the depth of the Great Depression there was not a lot of money. Mother had learned how to be frugal from her mother, Grandma Allen. We never used wrinkled-up pages out of a catalog for toilet paper but we did use the tissue which was wrapped around peaches. Daddy used to buy things at farm auctions such as the walnut drop leaf table and five chairs Mary uses. Milo (and Doreen one summer) slept on an old army cot, before Milo slept in the basement on a set of bunk beds. Doreen slept on a corn husk-filled mattress. Mother repainted and restrung the venation blinds. Rather than buying new art work she "touched up" the Van Gogh so it would match the living room better. She sewed clothes for the family. Following World War II, when our dresses or skirts were too short, she would add a contrasting band to the bottom or at the waist band to lengthen them. Three chicken feed sacks made a pair of pajamas. The sacks came in pretty prints so we had dresses and play clothes made from them, too. One year for Christmas she made a wooden wagon full of blocks, a boat, and a three car train for Milo.

Other than the bedroom set that Doreen and Donna Belle got when they were 12 and 11 and a sofa or two, there wasn't any new furniture to speak of. Most of the furniture was black walnut (Victorian antique) and much of it was found in the buildings and sheds at Grandma's house or at farm auctions. Mother refinished the tables, re-caned the chairs and rockers, and reupholstered or made slipcovers when necessary.

On the other hand Daddy had some of the newest machinery, flare-top wagons, milking equipment, and used modern farming techniques such as tiling, terracing, and other kinds of conservation.

They were generous, helping out the hired men when necessary, supporting children on mission fields, sponsoring a Displaced Persons family, as well as supporting our church. When the local ball field wanted to put up lights, Daddy

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[1] For more information, see pp. 43-46 in *Dotha's Stories*, March 1999.

[2] Mother's family called her "Dot" for short. Her mail came to her as "Dot, Veo, IA."

[3] Joan (Smith) Jones, our cousin, wrote, "Speaking of twins, the story is that when Donald and Dorothy arrived, some persons (friends? family?) took the train from Richland to Veo to deliver cloths for diapers-- It would seem that twins had not been expected."

[4] "The Pleasant Plain High School boys and girls basketball teams played very interesting games here Friday, January 30 (1925). The boys' game was very rough; the score being 29 to 15 in favor of Pleasant Plain. The score was 26 to 5 for the girls' game in favor of Pleasant Plain, being an easy victory. Dorothy Allen, the outstanding player, made 24 of the 26 points." (Mary's comment: I thought mother played in the center court moving the ball from the guards to the forwards. She was all of 5' 2".)

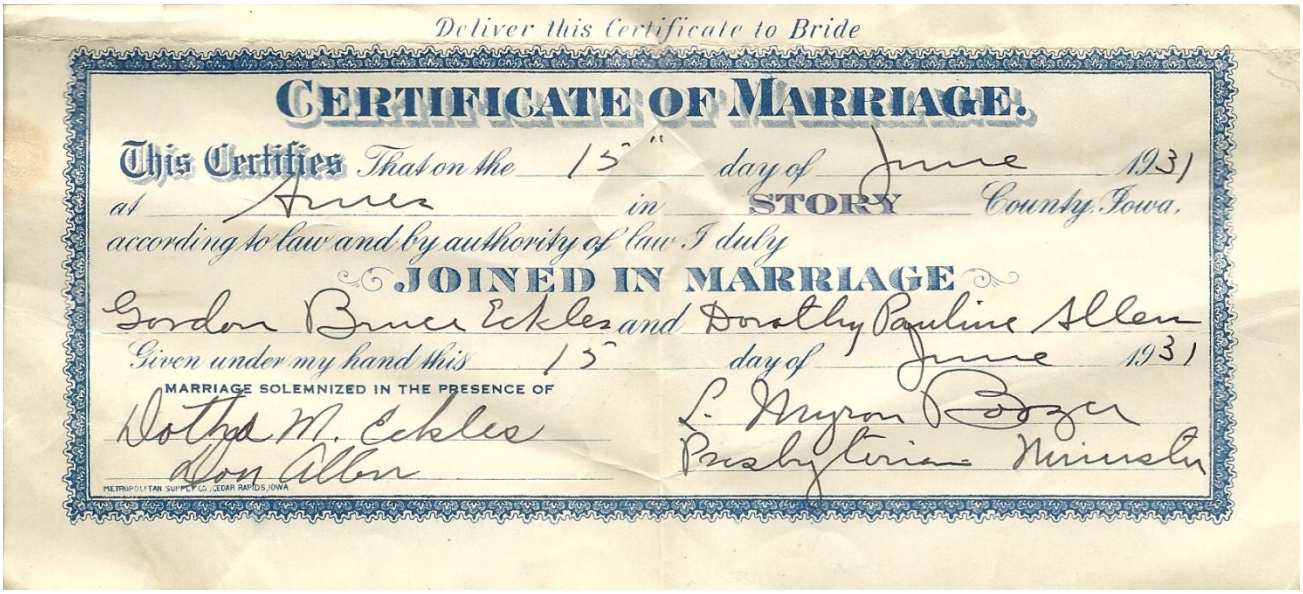
[5] See a description of this house in the chapter **The Houses We Lived In**, p. 5.

used our post-hole-digger to put in the poles. The ball team never charged us admission. When the new Presbyterian Church was built in 1955 Daddy dug the ditch for the footings using our tiling machine.

Both Mother and Daddy were active in our church all of their lives. Daddy was both an elder and trustee, was the Sunday School Superintendent for a number of years and was chair of the building committee when our new church was built in 1955. Mother taught nursery Sunday school for years, belonged to the women's group and volunteered for many things including staining the rafters of our new church. They were both active as 4-H leaders, in the County Extension organizations, and other community and county organizations.

Daddy was on the Aplington School Board for many years and gave each of us our diploma at graduation. His father before him was on the school board and gave Daddy his diploma.

Mother enjoyed playing bridge and belonged to a Bridge Club. She also belonged to a Birthday Club. They got together one evening while their husbands were at the Oyster Supper at our church. Then they started celebrating their birthdays and this group went on for a number of years. They did silly things like all wearing a burgundy bow in their hair at each meeting. Mother volunteered at the nursing home, reading to residents, inviting them to our home for tea, or taking them for rides out in the countryside.



Deliver this Certificate to Bride

CERTIFICATE OF MARRIAGE.

This Certifies That on the 13th day of June 1931
at Ames in STORY County, Iowa,
according to law and by authority of law I duly
JOINED IN MARRIAGE
Gordon Bruce Eckles and Dorothy Pauline Allen
Given under my hand this 13th day of June 1931
MARRIAGE SOLEMNIZED IN THE PRESENCE OF
Dotha M. Eckles
Don Allen
L. Myron Boozer
Presbyterian Minister

METROPOLITAN SUPPLY CO., CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA

FOUR CHILDREN

by Doreen

Doreen Elizabeth was born on January 5, 1933. 1933 was the worst year of the depression with unemployment peaking at 25.2%. Herbert Clark Hoover was the president of the United States. The US government tried to stop the panic of people withdrawing their money from the banks. The continuing drought in the Midwest made even more of the land into dust bowls. The average wage, if one had a job, was $1,550 a year. A gallon of gas cost 10 cents. A loaf of bread cost 7 cents. A stamp for 1 ounce cost 3 cents. Mother had a friend, Melinda Harken, who had a baby born 6 months before Doreen was born. If she had had a girl, she was going to name her Doreen. Instead she had a son, Karl, who was in Doreen's classes all through school. After Melinda said she didn't plan to have any more children, Mother asked if she could use the name, and that's where the name "Doreen" came from. I don't know about "Elizabeth."

Donna Belle was born on March 1, 1934. 1934 saw the turning point in the great depression in America with unemployment decreasing to 22%. Franklin Delano Roosevelt was the president of the United States. In other parts of the world some of the political changes occurring would cause the next world war. The further weather drought problems in the US Midwest continued in 1934 and some 35 million acres of farmland were utterly destroyed and a further 225 million acres were in danger. The president set up public works around the US including bridges, roads, and flood control dams in an attempt to put America back on its feet. The average wage was $1,600 a year. A gallon of gas cost 10 cents. A loaf of bread cost 8 cents. I don't know where the name Donna came from, but "Belle" was one of Grandma Allen's middle names – Effie Hannah Belle (Jones) Allen. Donna Belle dropped her middle name in high school.

Mary Ann was born on April 13, 1938. In 1938, following a number of years of success with the US economy, a recession hit which caused unemployment to rise back to 19%. Franklin Delano Roosevelt was the president of the United States. In Europe, Germany was continuing its strategy of persecuting the Jews and occupation in Czechoslovakia. The minimum hourly wage was 40 cents per hour for a 44 hour workweek. The average wage was $1730 a year. A gallon of gas cost 10 cents. A loaf of bread cost 9 cents. Mary Ann was named after our Great Grandma Burnham - Mary Prall (Smith) Burnham. She also had another great grand grandmother named Mary, Mary (Schelp) Allen. Double names were common in the Deep South, but were not unusual in the Midwest. Mary Ann dropped her middle name in high school.

Milo Allen was born on February 13, 1945. On that day a massive air raid using incendiaries completely destroyed the city of Dresden, Germany. Franklin Delano Roosevelt was still president, but he died on April 12, 1945 and Vice President Harry S. Truman became president. Areas throughout Europe and Asia were being liberated. V-E Day (Europe Victory) was May 7, 1945 and V-J Day (Japan Victory) was August 14, 1945 after two atom bombs were dropped on cities in Japan. The average wage was $2,400 a year. A gallon of gas cost 15 cents. Milo was the name of Daddy's roommate at Iowa State College. Allen was Mother's maiden name. Milo Cheney, Daddy's roommate, had a son named Bruce.

We three girls were born at home. Milo was born at the DeBuhr Maternity Home in Aplington which was run by the DeBuhr sisters from 1938 to 1950. Johanna was a nurse with midwifery training from a school in Minneapolis. Lanie was the chief cook and housekeeper. The usual stay was 10 days, later shortened to 7 days. I was delivered by Dr. John A. Rolfs who made house calls in his Model T or, in the winter, with a horse and cutter. Donna Belle, Mary Ann and Milo were all delivered by "Dr. Fred" Rolfs, John Rolfs' son, Daddy's high school classmate.

When Milo was born he and Mother spent the usual 7-10 days at the DeBuhr Maternity Home. I remember that the night Mother went there she made a large pot of chili so that we would have something to eat while Daddy was taking care of us. No one under the age of 12 could visit at the Maternity Home. Since I had just turned 12 on January 5, I went to see Mother almost every day. I went there from school and then walked home after visiting her. Since new mothers had to stay in bed for a week or so, they got weak and had problems walking, so Mother sat on the edge of the bed and swung her legs back and forth.

1950 – Korean War – What began as a civil war soon became a war between the Western powers and the Communist powers. Latin America was the center of covert and overt conflict between the Soviet Union and the United States. Harry S. Truman was president. The average annual income was $3,210. Gas was 18 cents a gallon. Doreen graduated from high school and started at the University of Dubuque. Her major was Christian Education and her two minors were

elementary education and English. Donna was a sophomore-junior in high school. Mary completed 8th grade and started high school. Milo started kindergarten.

1955 - *C*onsumerism took off in a big way. Seven out of 10 families now owned a car. Dwight D. Eisenhower was president. The average annual income was $3,851 per year, and the minimum wage was raised to $1.00 per hour. Gas was 23 cents a gallon. In 1958 postage went from 3 cents to 4 cents an ounce. The first McDonalds was erected in 1955. The American Civil Rights Movement began. Doreen married Arlo Duba in 1954. Donna attended the University of Dubuque for two years and graduated from the Presbyterian Hospital School of Nursing in Chicago with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing. She married B. J. Ukena in 1956. Mary graduated from high school in 1956 and began nurses training at the State University of Iowa (now the University of Iowa). Milo started 5th grade in 1955

Donna and Daddy

1960 – This is where our story ends. Dwight D. Eisenhower was president. The average annual income was $5,315. A gallon of gas cost 25 cents. Doreen and Arlo have 2 sons, Paul and Bruce. Donna and BJ have two children, Barry and Debra. Mary and Leland Meyer were married in June 1960 and she graduated from the State University of Iowa with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing in 1961. Milo was a sophomore in high school. He graduated from Iowa State University in 1972 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering.

THE HOUSES WE LIVED IN

By Doreen

This chapter is about the three houses that we three girls lived in while we were children. Milo wasn't born until 1945 and only lived in the last house.

The first was an old farm house on a farm called Oak Crest, situated a little more than a mile west of Aplington, Iowa, on the south side of old US Highway 20. This is where Donna Belle (1934), Mary Ann (1938) and I (1933) were born. Memories before the age of five are fragmentary and vague, so it shouldn't be surprising that I remember very little about the first house.

Mother and Daddy moved into this house when they were married in 1931. The house must have had at least two or three rooms downstairs and also that many bedrooms upstairs. I don't remember anything about my bed or the sleeping arrangements. My only memory of the living room, which was on the west end of the house, is that Mary Ann's bassinette was there. Donna Belle and I must have stayed with Grandma Eckles while Mary Ann was born. When Daddy brought us home, he asked if we wanted to see the new baby. I don't remember if we had been told that there was going to be a new baby. We had to be lifted up to see her because the bassinette was on a high frame.

Doreen, by the porch

The kitchen was on the east end of the house. There was a pantry on the north side of the kitchen and a large porch outside the kitchen door, facing south. Donna Belle remembers that a litter of puppies was born underneath it.[6] There was a cob/wood-burning stove in the kitchen. Also there must have been a basement at least under that part of the house. Once when Mother had gone to the basement to do the laundry I had entertained myself by throwing the cobs out of the cob bin onto the kitchen floor. When I heard her coming upstairs I toddled across the cobs to the basement door. Mother told me that those were my first steps!

Our first house

I'm sure there was electricity in this house. I know we didn't have running water, but I recall a hand pump and a sink in the kitchen. That is where Daddy washed up for dinner (our noon meal). This water must have come from a cistern. I remember that the "outhouse" was down a path, east of the house (*see in the left background of the photo on the right)*. There was a windmill south of the house, past Mother's garden.

Doreen and Donna Belle

The garage was west of the house, across the driveway which went from the highway to the barnyard. When Donna Belle and I were three or four years old we went "to town" in the morning with Daddy, probably to take the cream to the creamery. When we came back, around noon, Daddy went into the house for dinner. Donna Belle and I stayed in the pickup (or maybe it was our car) and took turns crawling into the steering wheel, rocking side to side. Once, when we stayed too long and Daddy had to call us for dinner, he saw what we were doing and we were scolded.

Daddy and Doreen

I don't remember birthdays or Christmases spent in that house. However, while we were very young the folks made a doll bed and doll highchair for us. For years we used them when we played with our dolls. The highchair and maybe the doll bed ended up at Mary Ann's house in Aplington.

In the summer of 1938, the year Mary Ann was born, carpenters divided the house in half, leaving the kitchen and pantry downstairs and one upstairs room. This half-house was moved across the highway on wheels. When the house was on the westbound side of the highway and it was noon, we stopped and had our dinner, right then and there, in the middle of US Highway 20.[7] I don't remember if the movers had dinner with us or not, but that would have been customary in those days. Someone must have been out on the highway directing the traffic around the house while we ate.

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[6] See photo on page 31.

[7] US 20 was a national highway with a lot of traffic. In the 1980s, when US 20 was straightened out between Waterloo, past Iowa Falls, the highway through Aplington was renamed State Highway 57.

After the house was moved on to the foundation and basement, a small living room and an upstairs bedroom were added. This became our second house. In the new living room was a stairway to the second floor. We had to use a ladder to get upstairs until the extra rooms and stairway were completed. We lived in this little house for six to eight months while a new house was being built on the site of our first house. These were tight quarters. Mary Ann slept in a dresser drawer at first. I don't know where the furniture was kept that came out of the part of the house that was torn down – maybe at Grandma Eckles' house or maybe in an out-building.

The house was heated by a cob/wood-burning kitchen stove and another stove in the new living room. The upstairs was heated only by the stovepipe that went through that room, to the chimney. It must have been cold upstairs, because Donna Belle and I got dressed by the stove pipe. Once Donna Belle got too close to the pipe and burned her backside. There was a long counter with drawers like one would find in a store, in this room. It was used for storage. There was also an attic off this room which was over the pantry. I don't remember that we had any running water but there must have been some way to get water to the kitchen. Maybe we carried water from an outside pump. The "outhouse" was north of the house.

I started to school the fall that we lived in this house. Mother must have taken me across to the south side of the highway to catch the school bus as it came from the west. That year Donna Belle and I played a board game that required reading. It was similar to Chutes-and-Ladders, except it was about farming. I could read most of the words. I remember one square said that someone stole the chickens and therefore we had to move our "piece" back to the beginning square. We often played this when I got home from school.

One afternoon in the winter Donna Belle and I were babysitting Mary Ann while Mother went across the road to see the progress on the new house. We were only 6 and 5 years old then. Mother had done the wash that day and the laundry was hanging around the living room so that it would dry. We began to smell something. The clothes near the heating stove were smoldering. We didn't know what to do. We weren't allowed to cross the highway by ourselves so we couldn't tell Mother that something was wrong. She must have come back to the house before we did anything drastic. She said if anything like that happened again and we left the house, we should be sure and take Mary Ann with us.

I don't remember our moving into the new house, our third house. It must have been in early spring.

There was a kitchen with a cob/wood-burning stove which Mother used for cooking as well as heating the kitchen and dining room. Later she got a combination range fueled with either or both cobs and gas. We used gas in the summer, but cobs in the winter. The height of the kitchen counter was specially built for Mother, who was short, which later became a problem because her three daughters were all 5'5" or more. It was at this sink, doing the dishes, that Mother told "her stories," taught us songs, and listened to our spelling words.

Our third home

There was a separate dining room with a closet for Mother's sewing materials and French doors that led into the living room. A hallway connected the kitchen to the living room, had doors leading to the stairway, the clothes chute, a back hall closet, and a half bath. This hallway is also where the telephone was. For many years we had a party line. Our telephone number was 22F2 (in other words, rural line 22 with two short rings; Grandma Eckles' number was 22F11, one long and one short ring). Off the living room was an alcove for the front door and a coat closet. The front door was seldom used though Mother designed the house so the front door was closer to the driveway than to the side door and the sidewalk definitely went up to the front door.

Upstairs there were three bedrooms and a full bath. In the winter, the only heated room upstairs was the bathroom even though we had central heat, a coal stoked furnace.

Mary Ann slept in a crib in the guest room which was furnished with an antique walnut bed. There was a window seat under the double window and the top was hinged. We used it for storage. There was also a cedar closet in this room as well as a small clothes closet. Later Mary Ann slept in the guest bed. It was never called "Mary Ann's bed," it was always called the guest room bed. An antique walnut dresser took the place of her crib.

Donna Belle and I shared a bedroom with twin beds. Donna Belle had a regular mattress but mine was made of corn husks stuffed into a mattress ticking because I still wet my bed, and did until I was about 10 or 11 years old. I always enjoyed it when they shelled corn because then I got a fluffy new mattress. We each had a quilt on our bed which Mother had made. Donna Belle's was a sunbonnet baby quilt and mine had alternating blocks of appliquéd animals and the alphabet. I made each of our sons a quilt like mine. Both of our quilts, and our children's quilts, had initials and birthdates embroidered in the blocks in the bottom row. I didn't make a quilt for Anne because she went

from the crib into the guestroom which had twin beds. I guess she can relate to Mary's relationship with the guest room!

Around 1945 Donna Belle and I got new beds and mattresses which were delivered from a store in Waterloo. This was all a surprise for us. We didn't know they were coming. It was a complete bedroom set, with a tall dresser, a vanity dresser[8], and matching beds. The style of the bed was called "water fall." Mother made each of us a new pair of pajamas to wear to bed that night.

When Milo was a baby he first slept in a crib in Mother's and Daddy's bedroom. Later the crib was moved into the guest room with Mary Ann and even later he slept on an army cot in the guest room. He must have slept there until I left for college, the year he was 5 years old. Then Mary Ann took my side of "the girls' room" and Milo slept in the guest room bed.

The side door of the house was a grade entrance which opened to a landing. On the right side were steps leading up to the kitchen. One of the steps was hinged and under that step was where we kept our boots. To the left of those steps was a removable panel through which we could fill the cob box. That was a clever idea, though we seldom filled the cob box that way. On the left side were steps which led to the half bath. These were seldom used to get to the bathroom without going through the house, which was the original idea. Instead these steps collected shoes and boots. Part way down the stairs, high on the left wall, out of reach of children, was a door behind which Daddy stored his guns.

This house had a full basement. During the winter we roller-skated down there. There was a large laundry room with a sink and also a shower, which was unusual at that time. Mother always did the laundry with a wringer washing machine, until they moved to town and even then that old washing machine was in the basement in case she needed it! It is now at the Peppercorn Pantry, a luncheon restaurant owned by Mary Ann's daughter-in-law. We pretended the laundry room was a store and we sold boxes of cereal and other things we brought from the kitchen. Our money was marbles. The white ones were 1¢, the yellow ones as 2¢, the green as 5¢, etc. One February we used a bunch of boxes and made a post office. We sorted all the junk mail Daddy received into these boxes. Around Valentine's Day we put our valentines in the boxes.

It was in the laundry room that Mary and Milo inoculated soybeans before planting them. First they cleaned the floor, then poured the soybeans on the floor and mixed them with a gooey substance about the consistency of molasses.[9]

Daddy had an office in the basement, which he seldom used except at income tax time. There was a safe in this room. We also called this the hired man's room, but it was never used for this except one summer when we had an extra hired man. Beyond that room was the store room which had a bin for potatoes. During the winter we had to take the sprouts off the potatoes so they wouldn't get soft. In the spring we had to sort out the rotten potatoes. The smell was awful. We thought that was a worse job than spreading manure on the fields. When Milo was in high school or maybe even earlier he took over the office for his bedroom. Daddy had bought a bunk bed for that room and built in a closet. Milo used the shower in the laundry, the only one of us who did. Years later, when Russ and Mary Meyer lived in this house, they took out the wall between the rooms and made a bedroom/sitting room, first for Zach and then for Caleb, complete with TV and exercise equipment.

The furnace room held Daddy's workbench which was always a mess. One day Donna Belle and I "organized " it for him, putting stuff in cheese boxes (they used to be made of wood), marking them and putting them on the shelves above the workbench and pounding in nails on which to hang his tools . We were surprised when he was not at all happy!! He said he had known where everything was and now it was a mess.

There was a coal-fired furnace and a coal bin which had a window into the garage. The hired man scooped the coal through this. The furnace had a hopper which held enough coal for a day or night or maybe both. It was always Daddy's job to fill the hopper from the coal bin and to empty the clinkers. The clinkers were broken up and used as a surface for the driveway, very hard on bare feet. There was also a "fruit room" where the canned goods were stored.

Underground garage with '48 Hudson

There was an underground garage at the basement level just off the furnace room. This garage could hold two cars end to end. The only second car that I remember in that garage was Grandma Eckles' car after she stopped driving. It

[8] The mirror on the vanity dresser was perfect for doing the mirror trick – more about that later – see pages 31-32.

[9] Bradyrhizobia japonicum, a strain of Rhizobeum bacteria available in liquid or powdered form, was added to soybean seed before planting in a process called inoculation. They mixed the seed and bacteria until the seed was completely coated. Then the seed had to be kept out of the direct sunlight until planted. *From* http://www.ehow.com/how_7716530_inoculate-soybeans.html

was waiting for Raymond Willis, our cousin, waiting till he could drive. Raymond lived on the next farm west of ours. None of us ever drove her car. We always drove the Jeeps. At one time Daddy had 3 army surplus Jeeps which were used for field work as well as getting to town and back and delivering milk.

One of the neatest things in the house was the clothes chute. It went from the upstairs to the laundry room, with a door in the kitchen. We often played "clothes chute" games. When friends came to visit they were also intrigued with the clothes chute. Years later the house we built on North Harrison Street in Princeton also had a clothes chute. Even when the house we lived in didn't have a clothes chute, I often referred to putting the dirty clothes "down the clothes chute."

Donna Belle, Doreen, Mary Ann

Another neat thing about this house was the amount of concrete sidewalks, also unusual for farm houses at that time. One walk went from the back door to the driveway. From that was a walk up to the front door. Then south from the front door was a sidewalk to the barnyard. We put up stop signs at the intersections. And then, wearing roller-skates, one person was the policeman and the rest of us had to stop at the stop signs or be caught. The cement platform by the backdoor was the jail.

Buildings at Our Place (West Farm)

The **old red barn** where we lived housed two grain bins on the north side, one for oats and one for corn or ground feed. On the east side was a small cattle shed, a stall for the bull, and two stalls for the horses, Babe and Duke. On the west side and on part of the south side were the stanchions for milking the Brown Swiss cows. In the barn over the bins, and milk stanchions and part of the cattle shed there was a floor for the bales but the part on the south side was only tree trunks laid over the beams. One time they were covered with only loose hay and as Milo ran across he slipped right through and broke his arm. He was probably a preschooler. Doctor Fred taped his arm to his torso instead putting a cast on it.

By the stanchions was a latticework of boards that formed a chute which could be climbed and also where we threw down the hay. The large door to the haymow was on the north side of the barn. Before we had a baler, the hay was loose. Later we had bales in the haymow. We often played in the hay mow, especially in the winter when it was cold outside. The hay rope and the trip rope hung in the hay mow and we used them for swings and for trapezes for our "circus performances." We were able to hang by our toes. Donna Belle was able to hang by her heels. There was usually some hay on the floor so we had a "safety net." After we had bales in the haymow we would make "huts," making a room next to the window to the south. We arranged the bales so that there was a small door to this room.

There was a cement **milk house** to the south of the milking area. It was about ten feet square and was where we separated the whole milk into skim milk and cream. Early on we sold only the cream and the milk was fed to the hogs. We drank skim milk but used cream on our cereal and desserts. On top of the milk house was a wooden water tank. The water was piped from the windmill to be stored for when there was no wind. From the tank it was piped to automatic waterers between each stanchion.

The **chicken house** was made of bales from soybean straw. Before it was built the chickens were probably at Grandma Eckles' place. The chicken house had a metal roof and windows. There were roosts on the north side of the building and the nests were on the east and west side. The bales made good insulation. We probably stopped raising chickens sometime while Mary Ann was in junior high or high school.

The brooder house where the young chickens were kept was moved from one place to another. It was often in the orchard which was east of our house.

The **machine shed** built in our childhood was a Quonset. It had sliding doors on both ends and was large enough to store the combine, corn picker, several tractors and the fuel (distillate and gas) which was up on a scaffold. The fuel came down by gravity. Sometime in the 1950's there was a fire in the machine shed. Before Milo and Mary Ann left for school they heard the hired man yelling. They went to see what was wrong and saw a fire. The volunteer fire department was called. The hired man had apparently left the gas hose open after having filled the "70" John Deere tractor. When he started it up, a spark ignited the gas. Daddy was there and they tried to get another tractor to pull the "70" out of the way of the fire. It was damaged but they were able to repair it. Before it was put out, Milo and Mary Ann had to get on the school bus. The fire burned the electric wires which went to the well and the barn and had to be replaced. After the fire, the gas tank was buried in the ground and a pump was used to fill the tractors.

One of our favorite things to do was corral the pigs into the machine shed and then open the door just wide enough to let the pigs out, one at a time. When a pig came out, one of us would be ready to straddle the pig and ride on it. Daddy didn't particularly like us to do this. He also didn't like us to grab the tail of a steer and let them pull us. He said he wanted them to fatten up and not get skinny!!

There were three **corncribs** made of metal. They were south of the milk house. They had mesh floors with removable doors in the bottom. Ear corn was stored there. When it was time to shell corn we hired a machine. The corn husks were used for bedding the cattle and the cobs were put in the cob house. Rats would come out at dusk and feed on the corn that had fallen on the ground. We had a good time chasing the rats and killing them with sticks or boards.

One of the Jeeps was kept in a small **garage** across the lane, west of the house.

There was a small cement stave **silo** north of the barn which was filled every year for the dairy cattle. Pigeons would make their nests on the steps to the top of the silo. We would catch them and keep them in the cob house. One of the hired men taught us how to clip their wings so they wouldn't fly away. We also gathered the pigeon eggs. We had a toy frying pan and we would set it out in the sun to get hot and then would try to fry the pigeon eggs.

There were several **hog houses**, mostly used for farrowing. One year Daddy bought some guinea fowl, partly to keep the insect population down, but also because they make an awful racket. He thought they would be as effective as a watch dog; besides the noise would keep the rats away. They often made their nests in the hog houses where Donna Belle and Doreen would gather their eggs. Once they tried to get the eggs while the guinea hen was still on her nest. A hen can be fierce. She flew at them, and they had to duck under the partitions used to separate the hogs but not before she scratched them.

South of our house was the **cob house**. It had a partition in it. On the north side we kept garden tools, some bridles for the ponies, etc. On the south side were the cobs. By summer time the cob house was empty enough that we used it for a playhouse, where we kept our dolls, doll furniture, and sometimes our pigeons. There was a small shelf on the south-east side of the cob house where the pigeons roosted.

The cob house

The **milking parlor** was built in the late forties. It is a long narrow cement block building attached to the existing **cattle shed** on the west end. The parlor was at two levels. The cows were on the upper level and the workers below at just the right height to wash the udders and put on the milking machines, and take them off before releasing the cows. There were three stanchions with feed available. The metal gates on these were operated with levers. The entry door was pulled open with a handle and the exit door was controlled with a rope and pulley. There was a milk room on the east end with a cooler, a water heater and a place to wash the machines. At first the milk was strained into milk cans stored in a cooler. Later it was stored in a bulk cooler and the Carnation Company from Waterloo piped the milk from the cooler, through a hose which went through the outside wall, into their truck. This building has become the greenhouse.

Mary never told anyone, but once she went to the milking parlor and found a hired man taking a bath.

After the **cattle shed** was enlarged, when Milo was in high school, he had a run-in with the Brown Swiss bull. He and Daddy were working with the bull, and Daddy asked him to get something from the machine shed. Milo started to run and the bull took after him. Daddy grabbed a shovel or pitch fork and started to yell at the bull, which stopped him.

The **pole barn** was built around 1954. It was built where the old barn had been and some of the foundations are still there. At first the stanchions were left on the west end, but later they were taken out. The track to put up the hay ran east and west so the hay mow door was on the east. Two large sliding doors on the east led to a cattle shed on the south and north sides. A small door in the middle on the east end opened into a pen for animals, perhaps 4-H projects. This part had a ceiling and hay was stored above it. Later this area was changed and a large siding door was put in the center so hay stacks and machinery could be stored there.

Buildings at Grandma's Place (East Farm)

Grandma's house - The original house on this farm was quite small in comparison to what you see in this photo. The Burnhams, our great grandparents, remodeled their house in 1898 when Grandma Eckles was at Iowa State College. A seven room addition was added to four existing rooms, two upstairs and two down. Originally the house was lit with gas lamps hanging from the walls, with additional kerosene lamps if they were needed. Using the windmill, water was pumped to the attic tank to provide running water in the bathroom and kitchen. The house was heated with a wood-burning furnace and water was heated through a connection to the cook stove. The house had special and unusual features. There were two sets of stairs to the bedrooms, one out of the kitchen and one out of the front hall. Between the kitchen and dining room was a dumbwaiter with doors opening on each side. Next to that was a cupboard which opened to both the kitchen and the dining room. Under the shelves were wide drawers which could be opened from either room. Under the drawers, behind the baseboard, was a secret hiding place for the silver. There were three whistle/talking tubes that went from the sewing room, which was next to the kitchen, to two upstairs bedrooms. To whistle you just blew through the opening; then to talk, you

Grandma's house, early 1900's; the two storey woodshed/summer kitchen is on the far left

pushed a lever which pushed aside the whistle and you could speak directly into the tube. *(See pages 103-118 of* Dotha's Family Stories *for a description of this house).*

The large attic was full of items left over from three generations. There were a number of walnut frames and other items which we refinished for 4-H projects. Anne has the antique child's swing dating from 1902[10] with Doreen's dolls.

When we were small Great Grandma Burnham (died in 1941) and Grandma Eckles lived in this house. In January of 1952, the Willis' house burned. This was when David was born and Dotha was still in the hospital. The Willis family moved in with Grandma while they were building a new house. When the house was finished, Grandma moved in with the Willis family.

When Mary and Lee were married in 1960 they moved into Grandma's house after considerable remodeling.[11]

There was a large **barn**, larger than the barn where we lived. When it was being built around 1900, Great Grandma Burnham thought it looked too plain so dormers were added where they could be seen from the highway. The first floor of the main barn had stalls for horses with a center aisle. When Daddy started farming there were three horses, two of them were Mabel and Barney. South of this part of the barn was a lean-to that used to be used for milking cows, but later was used as a loafing shed for steers. The second floor of the barn was the haymow and we filled it with hay just like we did at our barn.

Just south of Grandma's house was the **woodshed**, about 15x 22 feet, two stories high with four doors, a door on each side. The north door went into the summer kitchen which contained an old cook stove and a large cupboard that Mary and Russ are using. The building was too full to see these things until Mary cleaned it out in the sixties. Stairs went from this room up to the second floor which was filled with junk, old newspapers, magazines, furniture, etc. That is where we found Tammy's pie cupboard. Doreen has a collection of old irons that were found there. The west door opened into the cob bin. The south door exposed shingles piled as high as possible, probably put there to burn in the old cook stove. Next to this was a connected outhouse, complete with a drawer to the outside for cleaning. The east door? Oh yes, it was filled with junk, too. *(See pages 10, 50-51, and pages in the Appendix in* Dotha's Family Stories *for more information about the woodshed.)*

There was a **buggy shed**, and a buggy and a surrey were still in it in 1960. A lean-to, probably added later, was where Grandma kept her navy blue 1938 Ford.

There was also a **machine shed** on this farm, but often machinery and tractors were kept in the aisle of the barn. There was also a **corn crib**, **chicken house**, **hog house, tack house** and **tool shed**. Junk and old furniture were stored in these buildings, too. Doreen and Arlo found a three-quarter spool bed stored in the area above the rafters of the buggy-shed. John has that bed now. Aunt Dotha played with her dolls and tea set in the **corncrib**. Later some of the hired men's children either took the tea set or broke it.

[10] I suppose that all three of the Eckles children swung in that chair/swing.

[11] See Mary's account of Grandma's house, *Dotha's Family Stories*, pp. 103-111.

FARMING

Daddy bought the farm on the hill soon after he got out of college (1929). Grandpa Eckles died a few years later in 1933 and Daddy managed Grandma's farm which was just to the east. After she died in 1959 the folks bought her farm.

In 1960 the Eckles' Farms consisted of 640 acres, of which about 100 acres were pasture. At this time the farms were incorporated, and Lee became part of the farming operation. There were fields east and south of our house as well as a small wooded area west of our barn lot. The hired man's house on the west farm was on the north side of the highway, opposite the barn. The farm after Grandma's death consisted of fields south and east of Grandma's house as well as a large feed lot and another field on the north side of the highway. The hired man's house on the east farm was west of the feedlot.

Between the highway and the Illinois Central Railroad, along the entire farm, was a large wooded area. The railroad originally owned the wooded lots. Townspeople purchased these lots when wood was still used for fuel. When coal began to be shipped by train people preferred the coal rather than having to hire someone to cut and split wood for them. Great Grandpa Burnham started to buy the woodlots as the townspeople began to sell them. They weren't productive but he thought he should own them. However, 12 acres belonged to our neighbors, Pete and Mrs. Luppen. Beyond the railroad were more woods and the Beaver Creek.

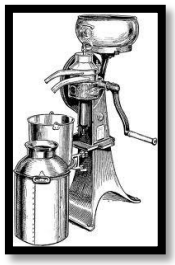
North of these woods were more fields and pastures which were reached by going through Aplington to the first road west, past the cemetery. These fields often flooded because of the nearby creek and had to be replanted. Sometimes during harvest the tractor and wagons went down a lane, through a ford in the creek, over the railroad tracks, through the feed lot, to the barn or silo, rather than going through town. This involved one child who opened and closed the gates so the beef cattle wouldn't get on the railroad. The gatekeeper also looked down the track both ways to make sure there was no train coming and then they motioned to the driver of the tractor that it was OK to cross the tracks.

Dairy Cattle[12] **-** We had a purebred Brown Swiss herd. The cows were milked twice a day. Milking was done by hand at first. At that time there were about 20 to 30 cows. Our hired man, and sometimes his wife, milked the cows. His family lived in the tenant house across the road. On his days off and when we were between hired men we helped Daddy with the milking. The hired man had a special call and the cows would start coming from the pasture toward the barn. He would open the barn door and the cows would come in, each to her own stanchion. There was water, feed, and hay waiting for them. The person milking the cow sat on a one-legged stool. When a cow had been milked the farmer would open the stanchion to let the cow out of the barn.

Our Brown Swiss cows pictured by *Hoard's Dairyman*, May 25, 1963

If there were cows that kicked, there was a special thing called a cow-kicker. The wide metal hooks on each end of the adjustable chain hobbled the cow's back legs to prevent kicking, or just stepping into a bucket of nice, warm, fresh milk.

Daddy had names for each cow. Each generation of that cow had a name that started with the same letter of the alphabet. There were quite a few cows whose names started with "D." "Doreen" was a kicker and the hired man didn't like her. We got two milking machines sometime before the milking parlor was built.



Separator

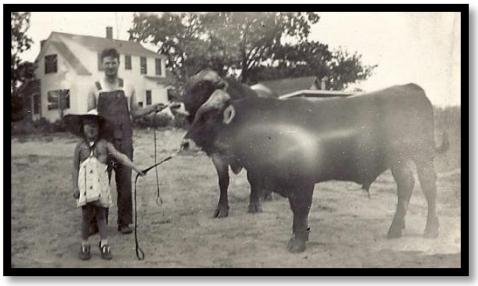
Before we got the milking parlor the separator had to be washed twice a day. The bowl contained multiple discs which would spin fast, separating the cream from the milk using centrifugal force. The disks would end up full of crud. Sometimes washing the bowl was done in the house but Doreen remembers that she also washed it in the milk house.

A cow-tester came to our farm once a month to test the cows for Brucellosis, among

[12] This footnote is for those of our family who were not raised on a farm (courtesy of Doreen):
Cattle raised for meat are called **beef cattle**. Cattle of certain breeds that are kept for the milk they give are called **dairy cows**. A "**bull**" is a non-castrated adult male. A **cow** is an adult female who has had a calf. A **heifer** is a young female before she has had a calf and is less than three years old. A **steer** is a castrated male sold for beef. Most young male offspring of dairy cows are sold for **veal.** **Calves** are young cattle of both sexes until they are weaned. **Yearlings** are between one and two years of age. In beef cattle they are simply called **feeders**.

other things. He stayed overnight even when we lived in the little house across the highway.

Later the whole milk was sold to the creamery in Aplington. About 1950 Daddy bought the creamery and for two years Donna Belle delivered milk to houses in town, using one of our Jeeps. She had to get up early to do this prior to going to school. When Daddy sold the creamery, the Carnation Company in Waterloo collected our milk.



Donna Belle (in dress up clothes) and **Daddy with 2 Brown Swiss Bulls**

We always had one or two bulls. We were very wary of the bulls and for good reason. When Doreen was just a baby a bull took after Daddy and rolled him on the ground. They were near a long feed bunk and Daddy was able to get in the feed bunk and run to the other end. The bull always had a ring in his nose which made him easier to handle. He probably would have broken a halter. Daddy also had an electric prod to manage the bull. The bull was mostly in a stall in the barn. Once when the bull was in the barnyard next to our house he wanted to get to the cows on the other side of the barn so he just leaped over the gate between and barn and silo which was 4 feet high and he cleared it without any problem. Then the big problem was to separate him from the cows and get him back into the barn. The Brown Swiss herd was sold in 1965.

I NEVER TOLD ANYBODY

Doreen E. Duba
Written in the 1970s

I never told anybody why I didn't like to clean chickens.
My mother said I didn't have to.
My sisters didn't care.
They'd much rather clean a chicken than the separator.
My mother thought it was because I didn't like to see the insides
  or see the chicken flopping on the ground with its head chopped off.
I never told her it was because I couldn't stand the feel of raw meat.
It was worse than rubbing cotton between your fingers,
  or worse still, steel wool.
I never told anybody why I didn't like to clean chickens.
Instead, I cleaned the separator.
My sisters couldn't stand the cream separator
  in the barn
    after dark.
They couldn't stand the smell, the feel.
Smell, like someone had been sick.
Feel, like thick cold slime that had been sick.
First, scrape out the yuk and feed it to the pigs,
  then the hot water from the teakettle that wasn't hot in wintertime;
    soap
      suds
        (the worst was done).
Wash the disks
  disks
    disks
(was it 32 or 102 - it must have been 102)
Inside
  outside
    around the groove with your fingernail -
      that smell again.
At last, the disks are done.
Hang them up to dry
  and hear them tingle
    jingle
      the only sound.
It's night. I'm alone. Turn off the light.

The worst is yet to come
the very worst.
The barn is dark
black.
Run
Run like mad
till you see the kitchen light
Walk
Walk as if no one is following you.
I never told anybody about the running.

Beef Cattle - We also raised beef cattle – Herefords or "white face." At first the steers were sold and shipped to Chicago by train. Later they were sold at the sale barn in Aplington. Local buyers bought them for packing houses within the state. The hired man at Grandma's place fed steers in an east lot and heifers in a west lot. There was a cattle shed across the highway from Grandma's house. Later a pole barn and silos were built there. There was a pasture north of the creek where a bull and some stock cows grazed.

Once a year the bull calves were castrated. Daddy always told us when they were going to do this and that we weren't allowed to watch. Once we climbed up on the cattle shed but couldn't see anything.

Another job was to drive a herd of cattle down U.S. Highway 20. This took a lot of people. One day Daddy came in singing "Playmate, come out and play with me, and bring you dollies three." We knew it was time to go to work.[13] That job needed one person down the hill west of our driveway and another east of the feed lot to flag traffic, one on the corner of our lawn to keep the cattle from going up into our lawn, one on Luppen's lawn (sometimes this was Pete), one at the south road (now Grand Avenue) corner, and someone to drive them. Truck drivers were very good about stopping while we drove the cattle but cars, especially with out-of-state licenses, became impatient. Those were the ones who honked their horns – not very smart when a farmer is driving cattle.

In the summer of 1952 several cattle were killed on the railroad, next to the feed lot at Grandma's. Apparently one of the steers was able to unlock the gate that went from the feed lot to the railroad and some cattle got out. We aren't sure who was responsible but Milo remembers that officials from the Illinois Central Railroad and our insurance company came to our house and a movie was shown, demonstrating that the gate wasn't cattle proof.

Raising Hogs - We didn't raise a lot of hogs, maybe as many as two truckloads a year. We had maybe 10 brood sows. They were fed corn and mash (skim milk mixed with ground meal). There was a big, big iron kettle that could be used to heat the "slop" in the winter. Mother used the kettle as a flower container after they moved to town. "Confinement" in our youth meant the hogs didn't roam the countryside. When they were ready to farrow, they were put in the hog houses. One sow can have as many as 15 piglets. There always seemed to be a "runt" among the litter.

When raising hogs, one job is to "ring" them. This was a very noisy job because it consisted of using special pliers and clamping the sharply-pointed split ring through the gristle at the end of the pigs' noses. After they were "ringed" they didn't root as much and make mud wallows. One Sunday when Mary Ann was little, Mother had her dressed for church and then she went about doing other things. When it was time to get in the car she found Mary Ann, absolutely covered with mud because she had been in the pig wallow. We also had great respect for the boar, much like we did for the bull. They can weigh up to 1000 pounds and can run fast. Once a boar, down at Grandma's feed lot, chased Donna Belle and she ran away, hitting a barbed wire fence which left a scar. Also one doesn't want to fool around with a sow when their pigs are little.

Raising Chickens - Each spring mother bought 500 baby chicks. These were first kept in the brooder house which had a low tent-like structure with several light bulbs to add heat. Chicken chores at this time consisted of filling the special little feeders and waterers for the chicks and removing any dead chicks. The word "pecking order" pertains to even baby chicks! After the chickens were big enough to be outside, they ran around in the orchard and barnyard. That was when we had to "clean the brooder house," a job none of us liked but after it was done, the brooder house made a great playhouse for us.

When the pullets started to lay eggs, early in the fall, they would lay their eggs many places, but especially in the straw stacks. It was hard to gather the eggs until the pullets were caught and put in the chicken house with the other hens for the winter. At some point we sold or butchered the roosters for meat.

[13] The rest of the song goes "Call down my rain barrel, Slide down my cellar door, and we'll be jolly friends forever more."

Once a year a man who specialized in culling hens would be hired to cull the hens. Any hen that he determined was not laying eggs was culled. Those hens were sold or used as stewing hens.

When we were old enough we did the chores each afternoon after we got home from school, carrying ground feed from the barn to the chicken house, making sure they had water, and gathering eggs. Mother cleaned the eggs and put them in crates which were stored on the floor of the laundry room until the "egg man" came to pick them up.

Mother had said she would raise chickens and sell eggs, saving the money for our college education, because the folks graduated from college and were married during the Great Depression. However, by the time Doreen was ready for college the folks had enough money for our education.

Making Hay - Usually Daddy or a hired man mowed the hay, which was alfalfa, clover or timothy grass. There is a special smell to new-mown hay. The sickles on the mower had to be kept sharp. There was a sickle sharpener on the farm which was powered by a single pedal though some were powered like a bicycle with two pedals. Sharpening the sickle was often a rainy-day job.

After the hay dried for a few days it was put into windrows, using a side rake. At first one of the hired men or one of the girls drove a team of horses to do this. The girls (Doreen and Donna Belle)[14] started making hay by the time they were 10 or 11. Once when one of the girls came out to relieve the other, the horses spooked. Either the reins were caught or something and the horses went round and round in the hay field before the girls could get them stopped. One of the girls continued raking the hay while the other tried to straighten out the windrows.

Later the side rake was pulled with a tractor or a Jeep. One of the Jeeps had a shield over the drive train which was the one we wanted to use. Otherwise the trick was to drive over the windrow in such a way that the hay didn't wrap around the drive shaft. If you weren't careful you could spend quite a bit of time under the Jeep, cutting the hay off the drive shaft with a knife. We didn't have a watch until we were in high school, so Mother would signal that it was dinner time by hanging a dish towel on the clothesline or closing the door on the machine shed. The farm was smaller then and we could see the house from many of the fields.

At first making hay was a two man job. One drove the horses, Babe and Duke, or a tractor, which was hitched to the hayrack, a flat wagon with a rack of several boards at the back. Hitched to the hayrack was the hay loader. The hay loader was powered only by the turning of its wheels that forced long wooden arms lined with wire tines to pull up the windrow of hay in a continuous stream, dumping it onto the hayrack. The other person was on the hayrack with a pitch fork, spreading the hay as it came off the loader.

After the war we had a Case baler (one of the few pieces of machinery we owned that wasn't John Deere.) We had one of the first balers in the area; therefore we did a lot of custom baling for the neighbors. Then baling hay required four people. Mother usually drove the tractor which pulled the baler. There were two seats on the baler. Daddy would stick the fork from one side of the baler, threading the wire through the hay to the other side where either Doreen or Donna Belle would hook the ends of the wire together (perhaps the dirtiest job on the farm). The ones that rode the baler always wore goggles to keep the dust out of their eyes. One hired man would pull the bales from the baler and stack them on the hayrack that was pulled behind the baler. We took water to the field in a gallon thermos. We always got it cold from the outside faucet. To keep it cold, we hid it under a windrow. At least once Mother forgot where it was hidden and ran over it with the baler.

The hay, both loose or baled, was stored in the two haymows, one above each of the barns. This job took at least three people and sometimes four. A load of hay was parked at one end of the barn. Two ropes and a pulley system were used to pull the hay up into the hay mow. One end of the hay rope was attached to the hay fork which lifted the hay from

[14] In our family it was "the girls" and "Mary Ann." Doreen and Donna Belle were only 14 months apart in age but Mary Ann was five years younger than Doreen.

the hayrack, up to the peak of the barn and across the track which went the length of the barn. On the other end of the barn were more pulleys. The hay rope went down the side of the barn and was hitched to a horse, tractor or Jeep which pulled the load up into the haymow. First Mother "led the horse to the hay fork." When we were old enough to drive a tractor or Jeep we used it instead of the horse. We had to make sure we didn't pull the hay rope too far, or we would have pulled the carrier right off the track. A hired man in the hay mow would yell when it was time to stop. Sometimes a child would be sitting on the fence and would motion to the person when it was time to start or stop. The person leading the horse or driving the tractor or Jeep would stop and the man on the hayrack would pull the trip rope, dropping the hay. The hired man would "mow" the hay using a pitch fork (or moving the bales), leveling the hay, putting it under the eaves. This was a hot, dirty job. The person leading the horse would back up to the starting place as the person on the hayrack pulled the hay rope and trip rope back down to the wagon. We had to be careful when we were backing up to the starting position so that we wouldn't run over the rope which Daddy was pulling. When we learned to drive, we drove in reverse as much as driving forward!! Daddy was always careful about moving to the side of the hayrack as the hay was going up in case a bale would fall off the fork. His uncle Howard was killed as a result of a hay rope accident. He was on the hayrack, and while trying to pull the fork back, the trip rope broke and he fell off the hayrack, falling on his head, killing him instantly.

While Mother and the girls were busy baling and putting up hay it was Mary Ann's job to watch Milo. When the girls were gone, Milo and Mary Ann took over.

In the early fifties Daddy traded the old Case baler for a new John Deere self-tie model. We sat on the east porch and cheered as the old Case baler was being pulled down the highway to town. We don't remember who bought it but we felt sorry for them. The new baler was a wire tie. Later we bought a twine-tie baler. By 1960, making hay and putting up bales took four people. Two were in the field, Daddy driving the tractor for the baler and a hired man stacking the bales on the hayrack. Milo drove the hay wagon back and forth from the field, stuck the fork in the bales, and then drove the Jeep to pull the hay up into the barn. Another hired man was in the haymow.

Filling Silo - First of all, silage is fermented, high-moisture fodder that can be fed to ruminants (cud-chewing animals like cattle and sheep). Because we raised both dairy and beef cattle, we needed a lot of silage. Filling the silo when we were young took a lot of extra help which were usually neighboring farmers. Silo-filling usually took place after we were in school. The corn was cut, much like hay, using the entire stalk before the corn had matured. Then it was hauled to the silo. The corn stalks were thrown into a hopper where they were chopped and then blown into the silo. A very wide, very long belt ran from a special wheel on the tractor to the blower to power it. This blower and its pipe were moved back and forth from the silo at our house to the one at Grandmas. Sometimes Mother or one of us girls would be in the silo moving the spout around and stomping the silage. Often one of us sat on a stool next to the hopper adding industrial molasses to the silage every few minutes.

Later a tractor pulled the corn-chopper through the corn field. The chopper cut the corn stalks and blew the silage into the wagon which was then hauled to the silo. Several men raked the silage from the wagon to the hopper of the blower. Sometime in the fifties we got two Heiden wagons. The front end of the barge boxes was lifted with a hydraulic cylinder. Racks were put on top to hold the silage. When the racks were off, the wagons were used for grain.[15]

When there was a crew like this, the women were expected to feed them dinner at noon, plus take lunch (coffee, sandwiches and cookies) out to the farmers in the morning and afternoon. Mother always had a full table. The tablecloth was yellow and white checkered. Dinner was often chicken, mashed potatoes, vegetables from the garden and dessert. Mother would have Daddy kill the chickens before he went to the field. He would just wring their necks where Mother had to use an ax and a chopping block which was kept out behind the cob house.

[15] As they aged, new running gears were put under them. When we got new gravity-flow wagons the racks came off and the wagons were used to haul water tanks. In 2012 they are still around! We do large scale recycling!

Harvesting Oats and Beans – When Doreen and Donna Belle were young the oats were cut with a binder which mowed the oats and then bound them into bundles using binder twine. Then the hired men walked along behind the binder, putting the bundles into shocks which dotted the fields until they were dry. Then it was time for threshing. This was also labor intensive. Usually one farmer owned the threshing machine (the rig). A group of neighboring farmers formed the threshing crew. The shocks were thrown onto a wagon and then brought to the threshing machine, usually one on each side of the hopper. The twine had to be cut before the bundles went into the threshing machine. The oats went into a wagon and the straw was blown onto the straw stack. Then Mother collected the binder twine and rolled it into a ball. These twine balls were around for years.

One day Donna Belle and Doreen were playing down at the east place where the men were threshing. Several hayracks, stacked with bundles, were waiting their turn at the threshing machine. The farmers weren't on their wagons but were standing off to the side, talking. The girls climbed up the back of one of the racks and got up on the bundles. The horses started to run away without a driver. One of the men was able to stop the horses before they got onto the highway. The girls went home and hid behind the large tiles that encircled the clothes line posts at the end of the garden path. They were afraid Daddy would come home and scold them. When he came home for dinner he called to them. Actually he didn't scold very much because he knew they had learned their lesson.

Later Daddy harvested with a pull-type combine. We girls took turns sitting in the field with the wagon hooked behind the Jeep. While we waited we read. One summer Doreen embroidered a large map of the United States with the state flowers while waiting in the Jeep. It is hanging in Eden's bedroom now. When the hopper was full Daddy would wave and we would pull under the spout to unload. There was a cloth bag hung where the weed seeds fell. When the bag was full the seeds were fed to the chickens. Beans were also harvested with the pull-type combine in the fall, but we didn't have much to do with that because we were in school.

Growing Corn - Corn was a big cash crop. Corn was picked by a pull-type picker and later with a mounted picker. A flare-box wagon was pulled behind to receive the ear corn. Those wagons were lifted with a hoist that was cranked by hand. The corn was raked into an elevator that conveyed it to the corncrib. We had three metal corncribs but most farms, including Grandma's, had wooden ones. They were built so air could circulate to dry the corn. About the time we bought the Heider barge boxes we also got a corn sheller and a dryer. The sheller was pulled between the picker and the wagon. Small batches of corn were dried so it could be put in a bin. A small auger transferred the corn into the drier and out.

Pretend the tractor is green

In late fall, sometimes before the corn was picked, we hunted pheasants in the cornfields. Daddy and other men, sometimes our uncles or older cousins, hunted while we walked between them, spread out across the field. This helped scare the pheasants out of the corn rows, usually several at a time. Mother cooked the pheasant and they tasted great with potatoes and pheasant gravy.

For several years Daddy irrigated the corn in the north fields. The water came from the creek. Irrigating meant moving the pipes across a certain number of corn rows and this took quite a few people. Our neighbor, Pete Luppen, helped as did Mary Ann and Milo. Mary Ann didn't mind the job except for the big, black and yellow spiders that made their webs between the corn stalks. To get extra kids to help, Daddy went to the bank and got rolls of dimes and paid

kids from town to come out and move the irrigation pipes. There is a photo of Daddy and Russ Meyer, pointing to July 4 on a calendar, showing that the corn was well over "knee-high on the 4th of July."

We raised our own sweet corn, enough to sell to people in Aplington, and during World War II we raised enough to sell to the canning factory in Ackley. This corn had to be picked by hand rather than by a picker. The canning factory in Ackley provided Italian war prisoners who picked the corn. Again, this involved feeding the crew dinner at noon. Mother fed them outside on picnic tables but asked them if they would like to see inside our house, which they did.

Later the canning factory provided a special corn picker which left the husks on the corn. The sweet corn was grown in the fields north of Aplington. Daddy picked the corn and after Milo had his driver's license he hauled huge loads of corn to the canning factory in Ackley, 10 miles away, pulling it with a Jeep. This was precarious because the load of corn weighed much more than the Jeep. He had to start in low gear in the low range, shifting from first to second and then third before he could shift into the second range. Hills, though they weren't very steep, were a big problem because the wagon would start to sway as it came down the hill. Lee was at the factory with a load of corn and as soon as he had dumped it, he would start back east until he met Milo. Then he took the load the rest of the way to Ackley while Milo took the empty wagon and went back to the field to get a new load and start all over again.

We also raised our own popcorn. Again, this couldn't be picked nor shelled with heavy machinery. We had an old hand corn sheller that we used. We also used this sheller to take the husks off of the black walnuts which we gathered, de-husked, cracked, and picked out - a big job but we loved them in cookies, candy, and on ice cream.

Tractors - When Doreen and Donna Belle were first helping with farm work there were three tractors. The H John Deere was small and it was used for mowing, pulling up the hay, side-raking, etc. It actually had a starter. Then there was a B John Deere which was larger and had to be started by turning the flywheel. The largest tractor was an A John Deere. This was difficult to start and usually Daddy or one of hired men would start it for us before we left for the field. We did a lot of disking and dragging after the fields were plowed. These tractors were fueled with distillate rather than gas. When Mary Ann and Milo were helping with farm work there were also a "D" John Deere and a "70" John Deere. These were not for row crops.

Gardening - Mother always had a large garden south of the house, with a grass path in the middle where the clotheslines were. During World War II when canned foods joined the list of rationed items in March 1943, the Secretary of Agriculture called for a national effort to create Victory Gardens. Mother came home from a meeting of the Butler County Home Makers, all enthusiastic about Victory Gardens. Each of us girls was given a small plot in her huge garden where we could plant vegetables. The following year canned goods were no longer rationed, but we always had a large garden and we still helped with the gardening. On the east, west and south side of the garden there were raspberries, rhubarb, and strawberries. Daddy usually plowed the rest of the garden and evened it with the drag. Then we would rake it smooth, use a string to mark the rows and plant the seeds. We raised many kinds of vegetables including potatoes. There were always several rows of flowers before the rows of vegetables. There were plums and apples in the orchard east of the house. All summer long we harvested the garden, canning or freezing the produce. Sweet corn and pumpkins were raised by the east hired man's house. When we walked down there to hoe we would push the hoes along the highway and when we got there they were sharp.

Mary Ann, Doreen, Donna Belle

Lawn - We mowed lawn with a hand mower that must have needed work. Doreen and Donna Belle would push and sometimes Mary Ann would pull on a rope in front. Our neighbor, Pete Luppen, had a mower that was much easier to push and when he stopped, the blade would keep spinning.

Preparing Meals - Mother was a home economics major in college and we had nourishing, balanced meals, with meat, gravy, potatoes, a vegetable, a salad (in the winter it was Jell-O , carrot and raisin, or Waldorf), and a dessert. There was always a plate with a slice of store-bought bread for each of us. Dinner was at noon and supper was in the evening. Mother often served casseroles for supper. The only pasta we had was macaroni with cheese. We girls didn't have spaghetti and parmesan until we were in college. We only ate Velveeta cheese and cottage cheese which Mother made. We ate a lot of that. She also made scrapple when we butchered. We made home-made ice cream, especially on March 25th, Daddy's birthday. We only made it if there was enough snow or ice outside.

After we butchered there was always the liver, heart, and tongue to eat. Mother marinated the tongue and added spices and cooked it. We usually ate it sliced and cold. When we butchered chickens there was the gizzard as well as the liver and heart. None of us children liked the liver. We chopped it up in small pieces and hid it under the mashed potatoes and gravy and ate it that way. Luckily Mother and Mary Ann liked the gizzard so that was a good thing.

Mother taught us how to cook, except to prepare meat. We also learned this in 4-H and home economics in high school. Each of us girls usually prepared one thing, except the meat, which Mother always did. Since none of us knew how to prepare meat she taught us just before we were married.

We had tomato soup and hot rolls every Saturday noon because Mother baked rolls on Saturday mornings. We always had a full Sunday dinner. One of Mother's favorites was scalloped potatoes with pork chops on top. She would start them in the gas oven, and then have enough cobs in the cob burner to finish them. We had popcorn every Sunday evening, served in a bowl with milk, like cereal.

On winter Sunday afternoons, while the folks were napping, we sometimes made candy, especially peanut brittle. Mother encouraged us to cook. The only thing she required, besides cleaning up after ourselves, was to write on the grocery list anything that we had run out of.

When the cow-tester came, he had dinner with us and stayed overnight. We never knew when he was coming but he often came on Friday afternoon. Because he might be Catholic Mother kept cans of salmon in the fruit room so she could quickly make salmon loaf for dinner. It amounted to salmon, milk, crackers, and some seasoning.[16]

During World War II bananas were scarce. If Daddy saw a banana bunch hanging in the grocer's window he would buy some and bring them home. Then we had bananas on our cereal or in a salad. During the war we often had creamed dried beef on baking powder biscuits for supper in the summer. Later it was a main dish salad - tuna, bean, pea, or macaroni.

In the winter, for breakfast, we always had hot cereal. If it was oatmeal there were always raisins in it. If it was cream of wheat there were always cut-up dates in it. It was never the other way around.

We always had a refrigerator unlike some farmers. Mother canned our vegetables until we got a freezer. The butcher at Diekman's Meat Market butchered and processed the steer or hog for us. The meat was kept in his locker until we had a freezer, which was probably after the war. Daddy would bring home a package of meat when he took the cream to the creamery.

During the war there was rationing. This didn't affect us like it did those in cities who didn't have meat available. The only thing that affected us was rationed sugar. When Grandma Eckles and Great Grandma Burnham heard there was going to be sugar rationing they boiled up a bunch of sugar in water and put the mixture in jars so they would have sugar to make apple sauce, etc. This was when we started using saccharin which didn't have the same properties as sugar and was difficult to use in desserts and canning fruit. To make us conscious of how much sugar we were using, Mother put our sugar in 5 juice-size glasses that cheese spread came in. We each had our own and competed with each other about who used the least sugar, except Daddy, who used way too much and then teased us by taking some of ours. Mother canned apple sauce, peaches, pears, etc. with very little sugar hoping the war would be over when we needed to open the jars.

Butter was in short supply during the war. Therefore oleo was made as a substitute. It came in a large white block with a yellow-colored capsule that could be broken and kneaded through the oleo so it would look like butter. I don't know why Mother used it. Many farmers' wives made their own butter. Because we had a dairy herd we always took cream to the creamery and could take butter home in exchange. Mother used to keep oleo hidden in the freezing section of the refrigerator to use for baking. We weren't supposed to tell Daddy.

[16] One of the cow testers smoked. When he came into the basement of the new house and we were often upstairs changing our clothes in the bathroom after school, we could smell the cigarette smoke through the hot air register and knew it was going to be salmon loaf for supper.

Once in a while we would take a picnic for our noon meal. Sometimes it would be on the far north side of the farm when Daddy was working in the fields there. He would have had to drive east as far as the blacktop, then south through Aplington and then 1½ miles west to our house. Once when we had a picnic in the pasture there, Milo was left asleep in the car. When he woke up, he put on his shoes, on the wrong feet, tied them like he had learned to tie his bathrobe (in a square knot) and came running to us. Another time we had a picnic in the woods west of the barn. We had corn on the cob and Mother had forgotten to bring the salt and pepper. Daddy said, not for the first or the last time, "Will someone go get the salt and pepper, Mary?"

Milo made his own peanut butter sandwiches by pulling out the kitchen cupboard drawers and using them for steps. Then sometimes he would walk across the sink to where the marshmallows and chocolate chips were kept. Once there was a large can which said potato chips on the label which was sitting on the kitchen table. He reached up and stuck his hand in for a handful of chips and found it was the milk that the hired man had brought in from the milking parlor.

Doing Dishes - Washing dishes was a job we did every evening. Mother had taught us how to do it. When you cleared the table you put the glasses in a line first next to the sink, then came the silverware, then the dishes, then the pots and pans with those which needed to be soaked at the very back. Mother tried all kinds of methods to get this job done. Sometimes one of us would wash and the other would dry. One summer, maybe because we had been fighting too much, one person or the other had to do all of the dishes. Doreen didn't like that very much. She remembers waiting for Donna Belle in the hut we had made in the haymow until Donna Belle was finished. Mother never just sat us down and taught us something. She taught us while we were doing the dishes or she was "leading the horse to the hay fork." We learned songs like "The Boy who Stuttered and the Girl who Lisped." Aunt Faye (the girl) and Mother's cousin, Ila (the boy), stood on the front porch at Grandma Allen's and sang this song for the "club."

The Boy who Stuttered and the Girl who Lisped

A boy who stuttered and the girl who lisped
Once played at the lover's game.
It was hard for the boy to tell his love,
But he told it just the same.
He carried her school books home for her,
On a bright September day,
And the boy who stuttered to the girl who lisped
Was over-heard to say,

"Lue-lue-let me tell you how I lul-llul-llul-lul-love you.
You're the only guh-guh-guh-guh-girl for me.
Lul-lul-let me bu-bu-buy you puh-puh-puh-puh-presents,
For your buh-buh-beau I want to always be.
Guh, guh, guh, guh give to me a pub-puh-puh-puh promise,
Tell me that you'll always lui-lui-like me too.
Lul-lul-let these words be written on your heart, dear.
I lul-lul-lul-lul-lul-lul-lul-love but you."

Now the boy who stuttered and the girl who lisped
Beneath th' old oak tree sat.
And the girl blushed red at his words of love,
And his heart went pit-a-pat.
She looked at the ground with modest eyes,
And then up at the sky o'er head,
To the boy who stuttered, then the girl who lisped
With shy sweet glances said.

Thill I like you better than I like the retht
"Tho' I guessth I'm hardly old enough to have a thweeth-heart,
You have alwayth theemed to be thinth there and thympa-pa-that-ic,
And I think of all the boyths,I like you betht.
Thince you wish to have me give to you a loving promith
I will promith that I alwayths will be true.
And I'll they thum words that thurely will thurprise you.
I will be your thweet-heart, andI'll thtick to you!"

Another song we learned was, “Coming Through the Rye.” It was written by Robert Burns. Mother had a costume for that which Donna Belle wore for a Halloween costume. Mother never sang in the church choir like Daddy did, but she must have sung solos and duets.

Comin' Thro' The Rye

If a body meet a body,
Coming through the rye.
If a body kiss a body,
Need a body cry?
Ev'ry lassie has her laddie,
None they say have I;
Yet all the lads they smile on me
When coming through the rye.

She had learned this poem in high school and we all learned it.

Abou Ben Adhem

Abou Ben Adhem (may his tribe increase!)
Awoke one night from a deep dream of peace,
And saw, within the moonlight in his room,
Making it rich, and like a lily in bloom,
An angel writing in a book of gold:—
Exceeding peace had made Ben Adhem bold,
And to the Presence in the room he said
"What writest thou?"—The vision raised its head,
And with a look made of all sweet accord,
Answered "The names of those who love the Lord."
"And is mine one?" said Abou. "Nay, not so,"
Replied the angel. Abou spoke more low,
But cheerly still, and said "I pray thee, then,
Write me as one that loves his fellow men."

The angel wrote, and vanished. The next night
It came again with a great wakening light,
And showed the names whom love of God had blessed,
And lo! Ben Adhem's name led all the rest.
Leigh Hunt

We studied our spelling words while helping with the dishes. We propped the spelling list up on the window sill above the sink.

Wash Day - Washing was done with a wringer washing machine. The machine, two rinse tubs and a laundry basket were set up in a square in the laundry room. The laundry basket was an apple basket Mother had lined with cloth. We used laundry soap that Mother had made and bluing to make the whites whiter. After butchering a hog, the lard was rendered and then lye was added to make the laundry soap. Once, when Mother was doing this she put the can of lye up on top of the refrigerator to keep it out of reach. Somehow Donna Belle climbed up on the counter and then got some of the lye in her mouth.

The wringer would swing around to each tub. After the machine had agitated the clothes, the wringer on the washing machine would wring the soapy water out of the clothes. The water went back into the washing machine and the clothes went into the first rinse tub. We would then slosh the clothes up and down in the first rinse water, swing the wringer a quarter of the way around and wring the rinse water back into that tub and the clothes would fall into the second rinse tub. We then did the same thing in the second rinse water. Next the wringer swung around another quarter of the way and wrung the clothes from the second tub into the laundry basket. Several batches of laundry could be done in a hurry because while the second load was washing we were rinsing the first load. Then it was carried upstairs and out to the clothesline. White clothes were hung in the sun on the clothesline on the path that divided the garden. Colored clothes were hung on clothesline on the east lawn in the shade. The clothes that needed ironing (there was no permanent press) were sprinkled and rolled up tight (no spray bottle) until they were

evenly damp. Then we ironed with an electric iron with no thermostat. When the wood stove was going we set the iron on it to keep it warm.

Our sewing machine was electric, no zigzag, no back stitch. Mother loved to sew and made most of our clothes. She said she would rather sew than cook, so sometimes she would keep on sewing and we would prepare the dinner. Between Mother, 4-H and high school home economics, we learned to sew well.

Spring and Fall House Cleaning - Spring house cleaning was the yearly act of cleaning a house from top to bottom which took place in the first warm days of the year. This cleaning was over and above the weekly housecleaning which we helped with. Mother did some of this by herself, but on a couple of Saturdays we also helped. This including dusting the Venetian blinds, washing the windows and curtains, airing all the blankets from the cedar closet, moving all the furniture to dust and sweep, turning the mattresses, etc. Fall house cleaning wasn't as big a job, somehow. After we were married we realized spring and fall house cleaning wasn't necessary though we did wash the windows twice a year!!

HIRED MEN AND THEIR FAMILIES

The farm almost always had two hired men, one on each place. The hired man at our place, and sometimes his wife or hired girl, did the chores morning and evening, basically milking the cows, feeding the hogs, etc. The hired man at Grandma's house fed the beef and hogs in the morning and evening. They both helped with field work, harvesting, mending fences, etc. Often hired men moved on March first. The Brown Swiss herd was sold in 1965 when Mary and Lee moved back to town. After that we no longer had a hired man on the west place.

Many of these hired men had fairly large families, living in the small tenant houses. Mother cut their hair in almost all cases. If they didn't own a car, we loaned them ours or one of the Jeeps sometimes. In some cases we took the children to church. The hired men we remember the best are those who had children our ages.

HIRED MEN ON THE WEST PLACE

This tenant house was the one we lived in when the new house was being built. There was a cellar under the new part of the house and one family threw their junk down there and we had to clean it up before another family could move in. It never had indoor plumbing but always had electricity. There was an "outhouse" and also a small barn. The west side of that barn was for the use of the hired man's family. It had a garage, storage for cobs or whatever, and a chicken house. The east side was for cattle or sheep. There was also a hay loft. Bales were thrown into it by hand. The hired men's children boarded the school bus with us next to our garage at the top of the hill so that traffic from both sides could see that the bus had stopped for children. The following are only some who occupied that house.

Ernie and Anna Van Ellen worked for us twice, once before we had milking machines and once afterwards. They had four children. Marlene was in Donna Belle's class. Her married name is Vanderwerf and she now lives in Aplington. Donna Mae was Mary Ann's age. The younger boys were Darrell and Ronnie who Milo played with the second time Ernie worked for us. Darrell was Linda Meyer's first husband. Ron lived in Aplington after he retired. Ernie swore a lot and had a bit of a temper. We learned four "bathroom" words from this family that our Mother never taught us, nor were we allowed to use.

One thing that annoyed Mother was that Anna would send the two children our age over to our house to play. When Anna didn't get the message Mother would explain that she would **invite** their children to our house and then they could come over or sometimes she would just send us back over there to play.

"Nigger" Jack - Daddy hired a Negro one summer to carry water across the road to the livestock. That doesn't make sense because there was a creek on that side of the road. Maybe he hauled feed or something. He slept in the hired man's basement room. He had also worked for Ralph Wessell's father and maybe for some other farmers around Aplington. He is the one who taught us about clipping the wings of the pigeons. Sometimes in the evening we would sit on the east porch. He hid his car behind the machine shed for some reason. Mother told us we were never to call him "Nigger." (The closest Negro would have lived in Waterloo. Doreen remembers seeing her first Negro. Mother and she were looking in store windows. They were kind of zig-zag and Mother was hidden in the next section. She saw a green coat, just like Mother's and took her hand and looked up and saw a black face.)

Helmer Arends (1945-1949) had three children. Vernon was older than Doreen and he did some farm work. Vernon's daughter is Leta (Arends) Dohlman. She and her family have attended the Presbyterian Church irregularly. Elizabeth was between Doreen and Donna Belle in school. She spent her last years at the Presbyterian Village. Bernard was in Mary's class. Helmer was single but had a housekeeper, Gertie Oldenburger. We never questioned the sleeping arrangements in that two bedroom house. See the chapter on **Play** for more references about these children. The hired men dumped their trash in the woods (when they didn't throw it in the basement) and one day one of us found a mustard jar with some mustard in it. We were going to take it home and a big fight arose.

Evalds and Milda Vindedzis (1949 - 1951) were Latvian Displaced Persons (DPs). The folks sponsored the family, a couple, three children and the wife's mother.[17] They had been living in a Displaced Person's camp in Germany since WWII. They arrived in Waterloo by train speaking very little English. They spoke Latvian and some Russian and German. The mother-in-law spoke High German, not the Low German (Platt Deutsch) that many of the people around Aplington spoke. Our church members helped furnish their house and our minister, Gene Siekmann, who spoke High German, helped with translation. We took them to church until they had a car. That included their family and ours - 6 in each! The grandmother was always the first one out to get in the car. Evalds (Ed) was always the last.

[17] See the newspaper article about the Vindedzis in the Appendix, p. 45.

Their children were Sarmita (girl), Ildse (girl) and a little boy named Yurie whom we called George. Their grandmother was Paulina. Milda (Mildred) was a much better milker than Ed was. In fact Ed was not a very good hired man. One of the first German words Daddy learned was *Schnell* (Hurry!). Ed wasn't used to modern machinery, but he did understand horses which didn't help much because we didn't use horses for farm work by that time. Doreen was in high school by this time and after school she tutored the children, helping with English and school work. Before Mildred went over to help with the milking she listened in.

When they had been here a year or so they sent for two aunts, Selma Kelpe and Julia Kalitis, and a nephew, John. He worked for awhile for our uncle, George Willis, who also had a dairy farm. One day John came home all excited. "There's a song about you on the radio. It goes "Mr. Echo, Mr. Echo." He was a flirt, loved to dance; Doreen was a freshman in college at that time and remembers dancing in the kitchen to music from the radio.

One morning in the summer one of the girls came to get Mother and in their broken English said that their grandma was very sick. Mother went over right away and at least Doreen went with her. When Mother saw it was serious she told Doreen to take the children to play in the woods and not to come back until she called for them. Paulina died that morning. When Doreen saw Ed coming home on the tractor at noon she stopped him at the driveway and told him to go home in her very broken German - "Oma, Kaput, Schnell" and pointed to their house. They were surprised that Paulina wasn't just buried in the woods somewhere. Daddy paid for the casket and the burial site which was where the cemetery sloped off to the south-west where sites were less desirable. Maybe it was free. Later the cemetery needed more space and those stones were raised. Mildred and Ed divorced and Mildred ended up in Alaska. George was killed and his wife contacted the cemetery and had him buried here in the Aplington cemetery. George's son Brian is also buried here as well as Ed and Mildred, who was buried in 2005. For years Mildred sent money to Mother to decorate the graves with flowers. Mother kept telling her that she didn't need to send money because Mother would use flowers from her garden to decorate the graves. (*See photos of these gravestones on p. 45 of the Appendix.)*

Mr. and Mrs Kellum (**1952**) had a daughter Eileen, a year older than Mary Ann.

Mr. and Mrs. Beck lived in the tenant house when Mary was in high school. They had a daughter named Rozella who was Mary's age and her step sister Betty White who was older. They were in a car accident while they lived here and Rozella broke her leg.

Mr. and Mrs. Bertram (1954-1956) had six children. Ruth was three years older than Milo, Elaine was two years older, and Mary was in class with Milo, Roger was two years younger, Sarah was three years younger, and Terry four years younger.

George and Geraldine Uhlenhopp had several children when they lived at the hired man's house at our place. Geraldine was Doreen's classmate. Milo remembers how strong George was. He could carry three bales of hay at one time, two in one hand and one on a pitch fork slung over his shoulder. Once Milo asked him if it was true that he could drive a nail through wood with just his hand. George took a nail between two of his fingers, went to the outhouse and drove it through the wall.

From 1965-1970 Mary and Lee lived in Aplington. During that time George and Geraldine Uhlenhopp lived in the house Mary and Lee had lived in on the farm. By that time the Uhlenhopps had 6 children, five boys and a girl.

HIRED MEN ON THE EAST PLACE

The tenant house had five small rooms and a summer kitchen. The upstairs rooms had slanted ceilings. It had electricity, but no running water. There may have been a pump in the summer kitchen. These hired men changed often. Sometimes when Daddy needed a new hired man, he would go to a certain section in Waterloo and ask around. He moved them and their furniture in a truck or wagon.

Ernie and Maude Cuvelier (1938). Their children were John, Ella Mae, Edith, Norma, Ernestine, Mildred, and Gordon. The older girls used to pick strawberries at our house. Mother said they picked on shares, meaning they could keep ½ of what they picked but we thought she meant they picked on chairs. Mildred was in Doreen's class. Gordon was in Donna Belle's class. Lori DeGroot, Tammy's high school friend, was John's granddaughter.

"**Spike"(and Etta Eiklenbor**g) (1943) was tall and thin. When he drove the tractor it looked like he was standing up from a distance. Their two sons were Norman and Clarence. Clarence went to kindergarten with Mary Ann and couldn't speak English. The community was mostly Platt Deutsch (Low German). Some of our classmates spoke that dialect of German at home or with their grandparents.

Doan and Mrs. Faye were memorable because they were such talkers. Mother always wondered who did the talking when they were alone together. He always used a tag expression, "Such as it is." If you asked him if you could use his knife, for example, he would say, "Here it is, *such as it is."* Mother could certainly tell us some stories about Mrs. Faye.

Harold Harden, a friend of the folks, worked as a hired man one summer. They continued to live in town and he drove out to do chores and work in the fields. His wife's name was Lizetta and she was a member of the Birthday Club that Mother belonged to. They had a daughter named Myrna who was Mary Ann's age.

Bob Immings (1950-1985) worked for Daddy and later for Lee for 35 years. When he did the chores, he preferred to use a team of horses which were kept in Grandma's barn. He and his wife Ella lived in the hired man's house for a number of years. Because Ella would spend any money Bob made, Daddy didn't raise his pay, but instead gave him a nice bonus at Christmas time. After the children graduated from high school Bob was able to buy a house in Austinville about three miles from our farm. It didn't have plumbing and we offered to put it in for him, but he refused. Bob was a hard worker. He could swear up a storm, but never a blue word if one of us girls was within earshot. One snowy morning when the roads were still closed, Lee went after him with the snowmobile. He met him outside Austinville walking to work, using a scoop to shelter him from the wind.

They had two children. Betty was a year older than Mary. Betty belonged to 4-H like we did. For high school graduation, the folks gave her a sewing machine. Mother also helped her plan an inexpensive wedding. Barton was three years younger and he and Milo played together a lot. Barton joined the Marines. He was first married to Judy. She and their children lived in Aplington while he was in Vietnam. She and Mary upholstered together. After their divorce Barton married again and had a military wedding. Daddy and Bob flew to California for the wedding,

Daddy to the right of the bride;
Bob to the left of the groom (Barton)

Ella, Daddy and Bob Immings

We all have stories to tell about Bob and Ella. Ella was paranoid if not "crazy." Bob used to work for Glen Stockdale but Mrs. Immings was suspicious of Bob's relationship with Caryl (Doreen's age) among other things. Bob finally had to move. Ella used to park her car on the road north of town and spy on Donna Belle and Bob while they were working in the same field. She used to stand in our kitchen and watch Romie Basken's car until he came back from hunting mushrooms to be sure it wasn't Bob's "girlfriend." Romie was our high school band director. Ella wall-papered the living room, and maybe other rooms, every year, ordering the wallpaper from a catalog. She prepared supper (fried eggs) early in the afternoon and then set it out for Bob to eat when he came home from doing the chores in the evening. If there was any mail from Minnesota in the mail box she got out the fly sprayer and sprayed the mailbox. Bob had some favorite expressions and sayings. Probably the most common was, "By Golly." When the cattle misbehaved he would say "You behave or I'll cut off you tail up by your head" or "I'll cut off your ear and beat you over the head with it."

Bob died in March 2002. After he died, Barton moved his mother to his home in Georgia where she died in 2009. See p. 47 in the Appendx for Bob and Ella May Immings' obituaries and p. 46 for a newspaper article about Bob and Daddy.

When the Immings moved out of the east tenant house, it was rented for a while. Then Daddy burned it and pushed the ashes and other debris into the former basement or crawl space.

PETE AND MRS. LUPPEN lived just across the highway from us, and a little bit to the East in a 12 acre lot that went from the highway to the railroad. Pete was never our hired man, though he did help out sometimes. They owned a cow or two and he was a painter until he retired. At first the house didn't have electricity. Even after they had electricity, they didn't have a telephone. Daddy helped them put in running water and the septic. He used the tiling machine to dig the ditch to the septic tank and helped lay the pipe. The bathroom took the place of a closet which was off the main room. After they had electricity, there was a small tree on their front lawn and Pete put up a single string of lights. Over the years the tree grew, but he always used the same single string of lights.

They were always Pete and Mrs. Luppen to us. They spoke German between themselves, but they also spoke English. If we children went to visit them, Mrs. Luppen would always serve us tea and cookies, using some of her good cups and saucers from Germany which were in the china closet in the main room. When Milo went over to their house he would sniff and say, "I smell cookies." In the main room was the heating stove. It had isinglass in the door, which was thin, transparent sheets of mica, through which you could see the fire. In the parlor they had a pump organ.

Once they babysat for us and Pete taught us how to play solitaire and then, while he was at it, he taught us how to cheat. Pete had a problem with drinking. Once in a great while Mrs. Luppen would come over and ask if she could use our telephone. She would call her daughter, Marlys Frey, a staunch Baptist, and ask if her husband would go looking for Pete. The Freys had three children about our ages. On Sundays the Freys often visited the Luppens. Then we would go over there to play. Mrs. Luppen sewed most of her granddaughter's dresses using her treadle sewing machine. After Mrs. Luppen wasn't able to get around easily, Mother would take a noon meal over to them.

PLAY

You might ask, "What did you do before TV?" The answer is, "PLENTY." We had two farms to play on. With a little imagination we found many things to do, to keep us occupied. It is hard to know where to start. We spent the summer barefooted, almost everywhere we went on the farms. Mother said we could start going barefooted when the temperature was 80° or after May 1. Once we went barefooted one day and it snowed the next day.

Acrobats - There was a great swing east of our house. Seventy years later it is still there. It was first made of hay ropes that would wear out, but Daddy bought a chain when country school houses were closing. When Milo was little there was a fence between the northeast corner of the house and the orchard fence to keep him off the highway. The black walnut tree closest to the orchard fence had originally had two trunks. At some time one trunk was sawed off and a large stump, four or five feet high, remained. We would take the swing which was attached to a nearby walnut tree, climb up on the stump and swing, hitting the ground once, then jump over the fence, hit the ground again, and then go back over the fence. The stump is long gone. The hole which used to be big enough to hide in is almost closed up. Another thing we did was jump off the stump with the swing, go all the way out and try to land back on the stump. The rope was so long that it was hard to pump on the swing when we were little, but we could do it if there were two people on the swing. We also pushed each other on the swing, running under the person on the swing and then catching them on their way back. Grass never grew under the swing.

Mary Ann, Doreen and Donna Belle

Donna, Mary, Doreen

Sarmita, Mary Ann, Ildza

At the county fair and state fair we saw shows with acrobats. It was fun trying to imitate them. We used the bars on the grape arbor and cross-bars on the clothesline poles. We learned how to hang from our knees, how to sit on the bar, then swing down and get back to sitting on the bar, swinging around like a propeller. That's how Mary Ann broke her arm. On rainy days or in the winter we played on the ropes in the haymow. With five children, the hired man's children and us, we learned how to make a human pyramid. Mother helped us make stilts and we played with them. We also tried to imitate the cowgirls who performed at the rodeo but we never were very good about standing on the pony or horse or doing any of their other tricks.

Sometimes we played County Fair. We would invent games to play similar to those we saw on the Midway and find pretty stones or other junk for prizes.

Dolls, Playing House, and Pretending – Doreen first had a rubber doll with no name that she can remember. It melted in the summer and the arms shrunk up when it got old. She also had two other dolls: Gwendolyn Gay and Jacqueline Joy (also known as Goldilocks). Donna Belle had also had a rubber doll and a doll-named Veronica. She got it for Christmas at the same time that Doreen got Jacqueline Joy. They were 11 and 12 years old at that time. Donna Belle's doll had dark hair and a blue dress. Doreen's doll was blond with a pink dress. Anne still has Gwendolyn and Jacqueline at her house, sitting together in an antique baby swing that we found in Grandma Eckles' attic.

Doreen with rubber doll and Gwendolyn Gay

Mary Ann had four dolls, Raggedy Ann; Irene, whose tin head became quite dented; Shirley who was left face down in the heat one summer which distorted her face; Marilee, a rubber doll who eventually deteriorated. Milo had the Teddy bear which had belonged to Mary. He sewed a denim outfit for it before denim or dressed Teddy bears were cool.

We often played “house.” There were lots of places where we played this: in the east hired man’s house, in Stockdale’s hired man’s house, on the lawn using the lawn mower to mark out the various rooms, in the cob house, in the brooder house, in the woods using tree roots for room dividers, and in a bale hut.

Bernard & Elizabeth Arends, Doreen, Caryl Stockdale, Jo Nevenhoven, Donna Belle, and Mary Ann, dressing up at the hired man’s house

Elizabeth, our dolls, Donna, Doreen, Bernard, Mary

Elizabeth Arends had a fetish for washing things. There must have been a table or other things in the bale hut that she could scrub. During the winter that we played in this hut she filled a coffee can with soap and water and scrubbed everything. The next afternoon when we went back to the hut, the water had frozen and the can had burst. When writing some of her memories, Donna remembered that at some point the wind blew off the tin roof and cut her eyebrow.

During Christmas vacation Mother would pull the davenport out from the wall about six feet and we could leave our “house” set up there. When we played house we had special names. We liked the names of Mother’s McCracken cousins on Grandpa Allen’s side: Victorine, Vesta and Vance. We also liked "Juanita" and "Wenona," Mother’s sisters’ middle names. We often used those names while playing "house" or "dolls." Doreen’s favorite name was Victorine Veronica Lou. Donna’s name was often Vesta Victoria Lee. Of course we had “husbands,” also with fancy names.

Sometimes, after mowing, we would rake up the grass, put it in the wagon, and then we played at “putting up hay” in the garage across the driveway. Doreen was Bruce, Donna Belle was Harold (the name of one of our hired men), Mary Ann was Dorothy, Elizabeth Arends was Helmer (her father), and Bernard was Vernon (his brother, who sometimes worked on the farm).

Swimming - There was no swimming pool in Aplington until 1978, but that didn’t stop us. When the folks were first married they went swimming in the Best Quarry, a lime pit. Blue vitriol was added to the water to keep it clear. Doreen rode on Daddy’s back as he swam across the quarry. The creek that ran through our woods wasn’t very deep but we would go wading there. After a rain we could almost float. In the ‘50s Daddy dug a swimming hole near Willises. It was fed by a spring but it was too cold and too muddy to be used. Doreen and Donna Belle didn’t learn to swim until they got to the University of Dubuque where it was a required gym class. In the summer when Mary Ann and Milo were in high school they were taken to Iowa Falls by school bus where swimming lessons were given.

Dress Up - Mother had a box of her old clothes and costumes. When we had company we often played “dress-up” with these. She didn’t let us play with her wedding dress. It must have been stored somewhere else. We dressed up in Grandma Eckles’ long dresses which she wore in college. We even wore her wedding dress.

Doreen, Mary Ann, Elizabeth, Donna Belle

Doreen and Donna Belle

Sometimes we would wear these dresses for Halloween. Once Doreen wore Aunt Dotha’s Campfire Girl Ceremonial Gown. Donna Belle wore a dress that Mother wore in a play when she sang “Comin’ Through the Rye.” Mother was short, 5’2”, and both she and Grandma Eckles were small. It wasn’t long before we couldn’t fasten the snaps on the upper part of the dresses. We got too big before we got too old to dress up in Grandma’s and Mother’s dresses. We weren’t very old, maybe 12 or so, before we couldn’t wear Mother’s shoes.

Playing In The Woods West Of The Barn Lot - We played "bank" on the old rusty hay loader which was parked down in the woods. We used stones for our money and put them on the tines of the hay loader.

Old rusty hay loader

When Milo was young, he made a corral for his pony (ponies), using the same old rusty hay loader, some branches, etc.

Closer to the creek, near the Willis' farm were great climbing trees. Milo made an elaborate two-story tree house with scrap lumber, a tin floor, windows from the brooder house, etc. The lower story was the entrance and there was a trap door to the upper level.

Top limb: Doreen and Mary
Bottom limb: Jim Willis, Milo, Roger Bertram, and Paul Willis

Playing in the Woods North of the Highway - Winter was for coasting. Our favorite hill was south of the railroad tracks and west of the hired man's house. The best coasting we had was the winter the hired man drove down to the creek every day to break the ice for the cattle to drink. This made a good packed surface. Often our Willis cousins and other neighbors joined us there. The best run was made by Harold Stockdale who got down the hill, onto the creek which was covered with ice and was able to go around the bend in the creek, heading south to the highway bridge. Even after we were in college we had sledding parties. This little section of the creek is where we ice skated. We never had any real ice skates, just the clip-on ones we found at Grandma's. After Grandma died in 1959, Uncle George and Aunt Dotha bought some of our land to the west of us and fenced it off. That was the end of that sledding hill.

We were often warned about a deep hole in the creek under the railroad bridge, which was called Parriott Bridge. In 1918 following several days and nights of rain, a train's engine started across the concrete structure when the bridge crumbled into the muddy water. Today two columns of cement stand askew, and a short distance away, half buried by over-growth, stands a wheel from the tender, broken and bent. Milo and his friend, Barton Immings, found it really wasn't so deep there but there was barbed wire in the creek under the bridge. For three box tops of Rice Krispies they got a little submarine about 5 inches long. There was a plug on the underside where you could put in baking soda. They sat on the two columns of cement left from the old bridge and floated their submarine, which would float just a little under the surface of the water and bubbles would come up.

We played on the railroad tracks, seeing how far we could walk on the tracks, balancing, before falling off. The bridge wasn't very long but we made sure there was no train coming when we went across the bridge because we couldn't jump off to the side. Once in a while Mother went with us when we walked along the tracks and we picked up coal that had fallen from the train to use in our furnace. It wasn't unusual to see a hand car go by. Railroad workers pumped this little vehicle by hand as they checked the railroad.

We spent a lot of time in the woods across the tracks. In the spring we would gather pussy willows and wild flowers. In the summer it was hot and muggy but we would pick gooseberries and wade or float in the creek. In the fall there were more flowers, bitter sweet and colored leaves. The red ones were especially pretty. We found out later they were poison ivy.

Doreen, Mary Ann, Milo

Down the hill from the railroad tracks was Pussy Willow Hollow. That's where Milo hacked out the underbrush and made a path along the creek. One favorite place was Fern Hill which was very steep and overgrown with gooseberry bushes and brush, unless the cattle had been allowed to graze in the woods. Nevertheless we tried sledding down it. It was almost too steep for sleds, but we used scoops and dish pans. Karen Bright, whose family also had a Brown Swiss herd, dented a runner sled and broke a finger when a tree got in her way. When Milo and his friends started sledding on Fern Hill, he cleared the brambles in the summer so it was much better sledding. He and Joan Sill were able to get all the way down to the creek and continue sledding on the ice. To do this, he took a good running start, plopped on the sled, Joan, running alongside plopped down on Milo and with that much weight they were able to make it. In the creek at the bottom of Fern Hill was a large boulder. Some of the boys who went swimming there named it Bare Butt Rock.

When Lee Meyer was in Boy Scouts and later when Milo was in the scout troop they spent weekends in the woods, camping, cooking, etc.

Northeast of Fern Hill was an area where there had been a mill, Grandma said. Instead of being level, there was an old road bed there with ditches dug on each side and a raised area beside it. During the time when the Arends lived on our farm we spent many days there. We named it Treasure Island and drew up maps of it, naming every rock, etc. With a little imagination we could play all kinds of games. Cattle used to be kept in these woods and the undergrowth was kept down. Years later when we wanted to show our children where we used to play it was so overgrown that we couldn't find Treasure Island and even the coasting hill didn't look very steep.

Playing in the Snow and on the Ice - When we were young there was a lot of snow and we certainly played in it. Some of the best snow banks were in the garden where the snow drifted up next to the fence. We made tunnels and forts.

Mary Ann, Donna Belle, Doreen

Some of the greatest coasting was when there was glare ice coating the highway. Klaus and Melinda Harken and Karl, their son who was Doreen's age, came out to our house. There was no traffic though somehow the Harkens were able to drive from town. We were able to coast on the highway, a long way down to the east or the west. The worst part was pulling the sled back uphill on the ice. Once we tried sledding off the low roof of the cattle shed across from the hired man's house. Obviously we ended head first into the snow bank.

Doreen

Daddy built two sledges which he pulled behind a Jeep, sometimes through the fields, but more often in Aplington when the streets were covered. They used these for Mariner's parties, a church group of couples whose combined added ages did not equal more than 80, though eventually some of them became Ancient Mariners. Sometimes we used them for parties with our Sunday school class or school classmates. We would then come back to our house for hot cocoa.

How I Broke My Arm By Donna

I broke my arm when we were playing airplane before school after Mother and Daddy left for the State Farm Bureau Convention in Des Moines. Doreen was on her back up on the fence line across the road from our garage. I sat on her feet and she sent me down into the ditch. It was the longest and highest ride I ever took. It was in the winter and the ground was frozen so I probably landed on my elbow. We went to the barn and got Ernie Van Ellen and showed him my arm and he took me to the doctor.

I think the folks had taken Mary to Vesta's[18] to be baby-sat. Doctor Fred had to take me to Iowa Falls to the hospital for an x-ray and then they put me to sleep to set my arm. I remember when we got back to town Doctor Fred talked to the folks and they said I could either go to Vesta's, to Grandma Eckles' or stay at Doctor Fred's house until they got home which would be quite late. I stayed at Doctor Fred's and now that I think about it Bess, his wife, would not be the first person I would have picked but I always liked doctors. I got sick to my stomach and she put a hospital type curved basin on the floor to throw up in. I was in a real high bed and I spent the rest of the day wondering how in the world I would ever hit that basin

Pets - Our pet dogs and cats were never allowed to come in the house. They lived in the barn. We tamed and played with the barn cats. Sometimes we dressed them in doll clothes and gave them rides in the doll buggy.

Over the years we had many dogs and they didn't have very original names. There were several Brownies, Blondies, and Fidos. One dog named Brownie probably came to us as a stray. He had a penchant for getting hit on the road. Once he was dragged off the highway for dead, but the next thing we knew he was running around. Brownie wasn't the only stray dog that we adopted nor was he the only one that was hit by a car on the highway. It seemed to happen quite often. Once we had a dog whose one leg was cut off

Milo and Brownie

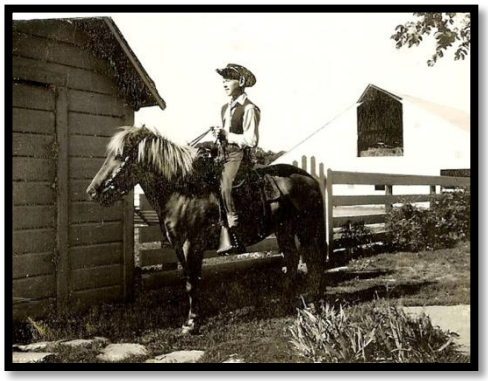
[18] Vesta was Mother's cousin, on the Allen side. She had come to visit the folks and they introduced her to Harry Voss. She became Vesta Voss. They lived on a farm northwest of Aplington.

with the hay mower. Grandpa Allen told the story about how Mary Ann slept with him one night and she told him about our dog with three legs who walked "like this," and then she demonstrated to Grandpa how the dog hobbled.

Over the years we had 20 to 30 ponies and riding horses partly because Daddy had been in ROTC in college and he rode in the cavalry We never became good riders, partly because the horses thought they were the boss. Once Daddy put two or three of us on a horse's back and the horse promptly reared up and we all slid off the back. It took a lot of coaxing to get us back on the horse.

Milo (center) and Sarah and Roger Bertram

Doreen, Donna Belle and Brownie's puppies at our first house



Doreen rode a horse to a friend's house, two miles south of our home. He grazed all the way there and trotted or galloped all the way home. Obviously she was not a trained rider. Doreen and Donna Belle once rode a horse to Vesta's house, 3 miles away and the same thing happened.

Milo rode the ponies and horses more than we girls did. His favorite pony was "King." In August of 1956 Butler County celebrated its Centennial and had a special county fair. Milo was entered in the Annual Saddle Horse Show and won first prize in his class. This photo was in the *Aplington News.*

Three of the horses were Lucy, Ginger and Bertha (who was named after Mrs. Luppen!!) Lucy would stand while we took turns jumping on her from the back, cowboy style. Ginger had been trained to stand when the reins dropped, but she wouldn't let you tie her up. Thunderbolt was a large stallion that Daddy thought only he could ride. However, Milo and Barton, using baling wire for a bridle, rode him. Once when both were on him, Barton pulled back the baling wire and Thunderbolt stopped and they went over his head. Spot was part quarter-horse, part work horse, but he was fast and one of Milo's favorites.

Our first bike was an old one the folks found in one of Grandma's sheds. The tires were old and wouldn't hold air so they threaded an old garden hose into the tire. Obviously this wasn't very successful. Later we had a new bike we all shared. Mary Ann learned to ride in the barn yard and she taught Milo to ride there also. We also had two trikes and a coaster wagon, probably the same one that Doreen had when she was a baby.

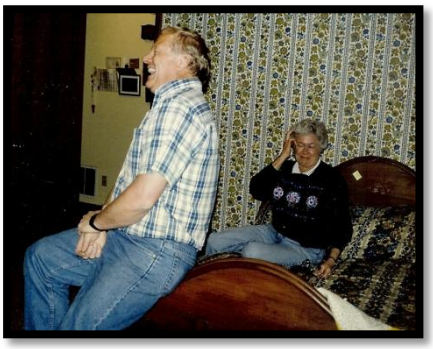
Games and Other Activities - We loved to jump rope both at school and at home. There were songs that we sang as we jumped rope.

Down in the meadow, where the green grass grows,
There sat _____ as sweet as a rose,
Along came _____ and kissed her on the nose.
How many kisses did she get
{count until the jumper misses}

We played cards and board games and acted out songs and gave plays. Mother learned a good mirror trick. We pulled our vanity out from the wall. Mother stood with a hat on her head and her nose at the center of one side of the mirror. Another person stood at the other side with their face against the mirror. They were told to blow. When they blew, her hat would raise for no apparent reason. When they blew again her hat went up and her arms went out. At the next blow, the hat went up, her arms and her legs went out. The finale was when all of this happened except her legs were hooked over the edge of the vanity. Now you guess what the trick was.

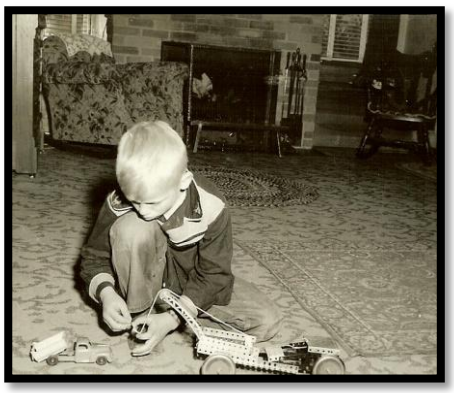
Years later, as the four of us were emptying Mother's house we saw the vanity and had to do the trick. Mother was the only one short enough to do it, but she had forgotten how it went, so Mary took her place. We had such a good time, we were laughing so hard that tears were running down our face. Just then Lee came in upstairs and heard the racket. He thought we were having a terrible argument.





Mary Ann especially liked to play Monopoly which can go on and on. Doreen found she could play with Mary Ann and read a book at the same time. There was a game we played by putting a string though both holes of a button, tying it, winding it up and making it spin by pulling the string, making a buzz saw. Another string game was variations of Cat's Cradle. Mother had a large button box which intrigued us. Sometimes when we were sick, home from school, we would lay on the davenport in the living room and sort out the buttons, stringing together the ones that were alike. This is when we listened to the soap operas in the afternoon such as *Ma Perkins* and *Stella Dallas*. After we got home from school we turned on the radio and listened to *Jack Armstrong, the All American Boy, The Lone Ranger, Captain Midnight,* and *Henry Aldridge.* For a dime and a label from a jar of Ovaltine, we could join the Secret Squad. In return we would receive a secret decoder badge; the Mystery Dial-Code-O-Graph enabled us to decode the secret message which was broadcast at the end of each show. In the evening we listened to *Bob Hope*, *Amos and Andy, Red Skelton*, *Abbott and Costello*, and *Jack Benny.* It wasn't until after 1952 that we got a TV. Families did more visiting each other than they do now. These visits always involved a "lunch" served part way through the evening. Sometimes there were sandwiches, but always dessert served with coffee.

Milo once wrote a paper at school. He said he had three mothers and in a way this was true. Donna Belle and Doreen were 11 and 12 years older than he was, so they took care of him quite a bit. Once Doreen helped him get dressed in his snowsuit so he could go outside and play. After a little while she realized she didn't have her watch. She called him inside and reached down in his pant leg, and there was her watch. He had a US jigsaw puzzle, and we taught him all the states and most of the capitals when he was 3 or 4 years old. Actually he knew 40 states plus a piece of the puzzle he called the "bird" which consisted of Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut and another piece called the "bone" which was New Jersey, Delaware and Maryland. Interestingly he also learned to put the puzzle together upside down. Milo had a good imagination. One day he was telling us how he was going to drive the Jeep up to the sky. We told him no one could do that so he decided "I'll just hit it with the bumper."



More than once Daddy would take Milo to town or Grandma's and then forget to bring him home.

Barton Immings was five years older than Milo but they often played together. They created great things using Milo's erector set. Barton was into electronics. He often had several tube radios taken apart at his house. Once they got the idea of stringing wire from Barton's house up to our house along the fence line, to make a telephone, using transformer wire which wasn't very heavy. The wire was so fine that it broke often because wind brushed it across some weeds or the fence. Once when they were playing with BB guns, Milo shot Barton on the cheek by accident.

VACATIONS

Vacations weren't very common, especially for farmers, and especially during the war when gas and tires were rationed. We did drive to Richland about once a year where Grandpa and Grandma Allen lived, a three hour drive. Sometimes this was at Christmas time and the roads were bad. Other times we would go in the summer for the Allen Reunion. This used to be a big affair held on Great Grandma Allen's birthday with her children and grandchildren, but later it was just Grandpa and Grandma Allen with their children and grandchildren, usually held at Aunt Edith's house.

Several times Donna Belle and I stayed there by ourselves. Once we took the train from Iowa Falls to Oskaloosa where Grandpa and Grandma picked us up. This was a coal-fed locomotive and because it was hot and the windows on the train were open, the ashes came in and got on our clothes. It may have been that year that there was a late afternoon rain storm. Grandma put us to bed early because it got dark. They always went to bed early. Later the sun came out and Donna Belle and I wondered if we could get up. Meals there were quite simple, sometimes hot dogs and beans, often with apple sauce and Fig Newton cookies. We never had store-bought cookies so this was a treat for us.

Mary Ann went to Richland with the folks and then stayed an extra week with Charles and Joan Smith, our oldest cousins. They lived on a nearby farm. This was after Uncle Gilbert and Aunt Edith moved to Stockport to open a hardware store. Mary Ann came home by train.

After the war we took Sunday trips. Our church had two Sundays off each summer to give our minister a vacation. One Sunday we went to Spillville in the northeast corner of Iowa known for its Czech village where composer, Antonin Dvorak, vacationed. The Bily Clock Museum was there also. Another year we went to northeast Iowa and visited Niagara Cave and also the smallest church in Iowa, St. Anthony's Catholic Church. Mother had made new sun dresses for Donna Belle and Doreen. That same year we went to the Ledges State Park which was near Ames. We drove through the campus and the folks showed us where they lived while in college, where they had "blanket parties" and the Collegiate Presbyterian Church where they were married.

Daddy, Milo, Mary, Donna, Doreen

Milo and Doreen at the Ledges State Park

Almost each summer we girls stayed for a week at our aunts and uncles. It was at Aunt Faye's that Doreen learned to ride a bike on the campus of the Cherokee Insane Asylum. She also spent one week at Aunt Dotha's when they lived in Conrad so that she could drive the tractor for George, harvesting oats.

In 1952, when Doreen taught Bible School on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota, the rest of the family drove out there. They stopped at the Badlands and Black Hills. In Rapid City is the Dinosaur Park with seven life-sized concrete dinosaurs. That is one of the places where the folks drove off without Milo. Flat tires at that time were not too unusual. They had one on this trip.

Mary Ann, Donna Belle and Milo at the Badlands

In 1954, the year that Doreen and Arlo were married, the rest of the family drove first to Buck Hill Falls in the Pocono Mountains in Pennsylvania, where the Dubas spent their first summer. They brought out some of the wedding gifts which they then took to Princeton. After that they went to New York City.

Daddy especially wanted to see Coney Island and the Atlantic Ocean. This was Daddy's first time driving in a city larger than Des Moines. They found the signs confusing and panicked a little when they couldn't find a filling station. They ended up taking a tour of New York City.

Mary, Donna and Milo in the Atlantic

In 1960, when Doreen and Arlo had moved into their new home on North Harrison Street, the folks and Milo drove to Princeton for Christmas.

Milo and Mother playing with Bruce and Paul in the basement

Christmas – Mother never thought much of Christmas trees. We had some, but she didn't enjoy them. One was a branch cut from a big evergreen at Grandma's house. (Nice and flat, didn't take up much room.) Sometimes it was a nice shaped branch or weed she sprayed with "snow" and decorated. When Doreen and Donna left home trees became even less important. One year, Mary was probably sixteen, Milo's teacher on the last day of school before vacation asked the class if there was any little boy or girl who didn't have a Christmas tree. Of course Milo was the only one and came home all excited. Mary had to go to school and drag home that used Christmas tree. She had inherited Mother's attitude. The folks didn't make a big thing about Santa Claus, but when Milo was young Donna Belle and Doreen decided one of us would be Santa Claus. Making the costume was a challenge. We wore Daddy's heaviest work coat. Of course it wasn't red, we didn't have a Santa's hat, etc., but as usual we had fun planning it.

At first the Eckles Family got together at Grandma Eckles and had a Christmas dinner, usually on the Sunday before Christmas. As she got older, Aunt Dotha and Mother took turns entertaining the family. These photos were taken at the Willis' home, probably in 1950, because Paul Willis was a baby in a high chair.

A**DULTS: Mother, Daddy, Aunt Dora, Uncle George, Uncle Lester, Grandma, Paul Willis, Aunt Dotha. Raymond Willis in the door. CHILDREN: Raymond Willis, Elaine Willis, Nancy Eckles, Donna, Jim Willis, Milo, Bob Eckles, Oliver Eckles, Doreen, Mary Ann, Roberta Willis.**

Christmas with the Willis Family was fun. It became a tradition to see who could say "Merry Christmas" first. Sometimes they would come in our basement garage and sneak up the stairs. Another time they snuck up to our house and knocked on the East door, one we never used in the winter time. Other times our family would park our car where they couldn't see it and we would sneak up to their house. Dotha usually made our gifts. Daddy often got frozen strawberries. One year she gave everyone unpopped popcorn and hid our gift in it. Another year she gave us all special things from Grandma's house, such as a silver spoon. Dotha made each of us sewing boxes the year before we went to college. Using a cookie tin, she filled it with a measuring tape, thimble, home-made pin cushion, etc. – very useful. One year we raised geese and we put a goose in an apple box and put it under the tree. They wondered why we would give them apples because they had an orchard and raised their own apples. Milo spilled the beans, but they didn't believe him.

Often our gifts were clothes or doll clothes that Mother had made for us. One year after we thought we had opened all our gifts Daddy came in with three cases. They were a typewriter for Doreen, a wooden clarinet for Donna Belle, and an empty suitcase for Mary Ann's dolls. One year the folks gave Milo a train set. The card on the package said, HO, HO, HO" – it was an HO train set!

Mother often wrote poems for gifts that she gave, for invitations to parties, etc. This is one she wrote for Paul Duba for his first Christmas. She probably wrote one for each of the Christmas stockings that she made for the grandchildren:

To Paul Duba
For His First Christmas, 1958
by Dorothy Eckles

I couldn't wait 'till Christmas time,
To send this gift and little rhyme.

It's something you will need quite soon,
To get your Christmas plans in tune.

Look around and find a place,
Where it will hang in some fine space.
For it, pound a nail in the wall,
Then sit up late for Santa's call.

Objections should not come from Mom and Dad;
Explain you've been a real good lad.
And need to have your stocking hung
Especially when you're very young.

So good luck to you, little Paul,
With stocking hanging on the wall;
And sparkle coming from your eyes,
While you wait for your surprise.

Valentine's Day – In elementary school we would make a box into which the students would put their valentines. When we had our valentine party, with valentine-shaped cookies, the teacher would hand out the valentines. Unfortunately this became a contest about who got the most. Mother said we should give one to everyone in our class. When we got home we laid out our valentines and decided which were the prettiest.

May Day – We made May Day baskets for our friends, using butter boxes cut in half, decorated with construction and crepe paper. Then we filled them with flowers and candy. Instead of taking these to school we took them to town and left them on a friend's door step. Then we would knock or ring the doorbell and run away. The person receiving the basket would try to catch us and kiss us - if it was Gaylen Lumley.

Fourth of July – We usually did not do field work on July 4th. Daddy always bought a case of pop, strawberry, grape, and root beer. We drank all 24 bottles that day. Sometimes we had root beer floats. Daddy usually got a watermelon also, which he cooled in the milking parlor cooler.

Halloween – We always dressed up for Halloween. We took our costumes to school and changed for the Halloween party. We played games and the teacher read us a spooky story. We didn't go trick or treating since we lived in the country. Once Mother said we could go to the Luppens dressed in our costumes. I think we scared them half to death. Several years we had a Halloween Party at our house, inviting our classmates. We held it in the underground garage. To decorate for the party we used chalk and drew skeletons, witches, etc on the wall, plus wrote "Happy Halloween." Those drawings stayed on the walls for ages. We covered the floor with leaves. We played games like "Bob for the Apple," and often had a hay ride, a treasure hunt, and a snake dance.

Mary Ann, Elizabeth Arends, Doreen, Donna Belle

After the folks moved to Aplington in 1976, Mother enjoyed the children who came "trick or treating." She had a witch costume that she wore. One night she went to the door of our neighbors. He was a classmate of Doreen's. When his wife came to the door, Mother was in costume and held out her bag. She pointed authoritatively to it. Cathy could tell it was an old person, so she threw the candy because she was afraid she would be grabbed. Then Mother pointed (authoritatively) to the ground and to the bag. Cathy picked up the candy and put it in the bag. Then Mother said, "I have cookies. Can we come in for coffee?" Daddy was hiding around the corner.

Mother loved to entertain - Usually it was a three course dinner: an appetizer, main dish (Lee would say it was always Swedish meat balls) and dessert. Often there was a theme and a center piece. One was a merry-go-round. It had animal crackers for the horses. It was set on a spool wound with string and as the guests were being seated one of us was pulling the string to make it go around. Mother would have place cards and usually a game. She often wrote a description of something we were supposed to act out. For instance Musical Mary would get the knife that had loose pieces of solder in the handle. She would rattle it or hum while eating. Everyone was to guess what her name was. Another thing Mother did is give everyone a job like "keep the water glasses full" or "help serve dessert." She entertained our teachers, the school board, and others.

When our cousin, Oliver, returned from submarine service, we made special place cards. We used milkweed pods to represent a submarine. Then we made a flag on a toothpick which was stuck in the pod and the person's name was written on the flag with alphabet soup.

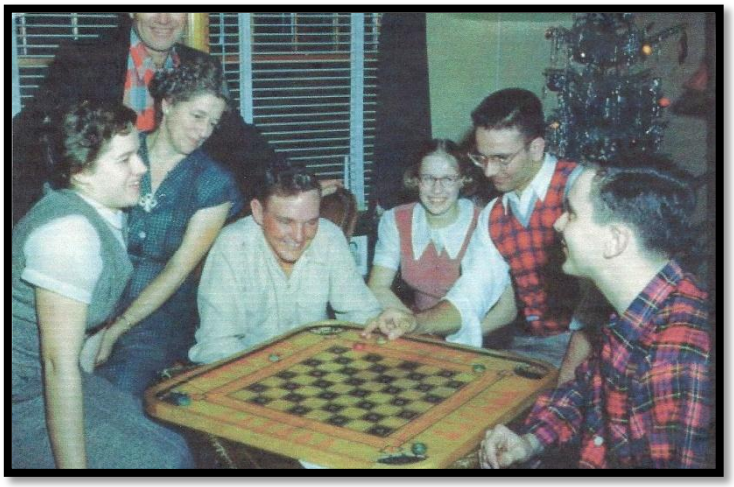
The folks were close friends with Vesta and Harry Voss. When we would go to their house for dinner she always served rice potatoes. We really liked them, so finally Mother got a potato ricer. One night Harry taught us the game of "Table's Up." We all sat at one side of the card table and all put our hands lightly on it. Then we would ask "the table" a question like, "How old is Mary Ann?" Then the other side of the table would lift off the floor in answer to the question. It was a little like an Ouija Board, where a message is spelled out on the board during a séance. Harry made it even more impressive, saying that it only worked in their parlor, which wasn't heated. It took us a long time to figure out that Harry was making the card table go up and down, giving the answers.

Donna's 7th birthday party; Doreen, the tallest

We each had a large birthday party when we were seven years old, inviting all the girls from our class. The year that Donna Belle was seven year's old she was wearing a cast after having broken her arm. From the time we were eight we could invite one friend for supper on our birthday, with our favorite menu, and then they could sleep over.

Doreen and Donna each had a Sweet Sixteen Party. Our table sat 12 people and we invited 6 girls and 6 boys. Mary Ann and either Doreen or Donna served the table. To help break the ice our name cards had a duty. Willy Aalderks' name tag said to crumb the table before dessert. Instead of using the table crumber, he had us all hold our place settings and he took the tablecloth outside and shook it.

One of the games that we played at parties was caroms. This game was popular with our family. Mother was especially good at it. She told us that once when she was young she had cleared the entire board in one turn. Another game we played was battleship. The game was played on four grids, two for each player. We made up our own sheets, a grid 10 squares each direction. The individual squares in the grid were identified by letter and number. On one grid the team arranged ships and recorded the shots by the opposing team. On the other grid the team recorded their own shots. Each ship occupied a number of consecutive squares on the grid, arranged horizontally, vertically, or diagonally. The number of squares for each ship was determined by the type of ship. The battleship took 4 spaces, the destroyer took 3 spaces and the two submarines each took 2 spaces. Each team had 10 shots at the opposing team's ships. After one round of shots the opposing team announced if any ships were hit and if so, how many hits each ship received. When a ship was "sunk," that team lost that many shots their next turn. After all of one team's ships had been sunk, the game ended and the other team had won.



Donna, Daddy, Mother, Clifford Ackerman, Mary, Ron Stockdale, Arlo

SCHOOL, CHURCH AND BIBLE SCHOOL

The Aplington Consolidated School was built in 1917. Daddy graduated from that high school in 1925. When I started school there was one teacher for each two grades. The elementary school and the lunch room were on the first floor. The junior high and senior high classrooms, plus the auditorium, library and teachers' room were on the second floor. There was a small gym, hardly large enough for a basketball court, plus the home economics room and lunch room in the basement. Before 1950 the Town Hall was moved to the school grounds for the industrial arts classes. In 1946 a bus barn was built and it included the band room. In 1950 a large gymnasium and several classrooms were added to the north end of the 1917 building. In 1956, after the closing of additional rural schools, a large addition was added on the south end of the 1917 building.

When Daddy was in high school Latin and French were taught. When Doreen and Donna were in high school the curriculum was very limited. Math went no higher than freshmen algebra. Daddy, plus all four of us had the same algebra teacher, Sylvia Martin, who taught for 39 years. Physics was offered but not required. In high school, all the girls had one year of sewing (9th grade) and one year of cooking (10th grade). The boys had a year of industrial arts, basically woodworking. Extra-curricular activities were glee clubs, band, drama, and boys' basketball and baseball. All of us played in the band and were in the glee club. Football was added in the late 1950's and Milo played guard. Girls' basketball was added in 1953 and Mary played guard or sat on the bench. Track was introduced later. Milo was the only one willing to pole vault. He says he only vaulted a little higher than the high jumpers.

Senior Play (Doreen is 7th from the left)

We were all involved in drama. One year Milo was behind scenes as the stage manager, but he had a walk-on part, one sentence and he had to have a costume.

All the rural students rode school buses. First we ate our cold lunches from a lunch box in a lunch room. We almost always had a peanut butter and mayonnaise sandwich and a cheese and mayonnaise sandwich. Later in elementary school we could bring food in a Mason jar to the home economics room where it was heated in a hot bath, to be picked up for our lunch. Mother sent hotdogs, soup, chili, etc. for our lunch. Later the school began to serve hot lunches.

We girls didn't wear slacks to school but we all wore snow pants in the winter. Donna Belle and Doreen wore long stockings held up with garters. Recess for the younger children consisted of playing on the swing sets and slide, jump rope, and hopscotch. Later organized games such as tag, duck-duck-goose, red-light/green-light, pump-pump-pull-away, and red-rover-red-rover were played. On rainy or very cold days we played in our classrooms, games such as musical chairs, tic-tac- toe, hangman, and London Bridge. When we got home from school we often played these games also. If we needed teams, Doreen, Mary Ann, and Bernard Arends were on one team and Donna Belle and Elizabeth Arends were on the other.

Aplington Presbyterian Church

Donna Belle is fifth from the left; Doreen is seventh

The family had been active in church for years, our great great grandparents having been charter members. We went to church twice each Sunday. In the morning we had Church and Sunday school. In the evening we had Christian Endeavor/youth group and evening church. We sang in the choir when we were old enough. Mother taught three-year-

olds for years, and Daddy was Sunday school superintendent. When Milo was born, and Mother was still at the Maternity Home, the plan was for the rest of the family to eat at the Lunchbox Café on Sunday noon. All Mary Ann remembers about it was seeing the back end of the blue '38 Hudson drive out of sight around the corner. She had been left at the church. Once, standing up in the back seat of the car as we were going to church on Sunday, Milo snapped his fingers and exclaimed, "I gotfor my gubble gum."

Daily Vacation Bible School - We went to Daily Vacation Bible School each summer, each morning for two weeks after regular school was out until we were in high school. Bible school was held in the school because all three town churches plus two rural churches met together. In those days there was a lot of memorization, such as Bible verses, the Books of the Bible, etc. Every day we said the Pledge of Allegiance, the Pledge to the Christian Flag, and the Pledge to the Bible. We learned the books of the Bible by singing them in a song. Mother helped us memorize while she was "leading the horse to the hay fork." We can still say all the books of the Bible by singing that song.

MUSIC

by Doreen

Mother played the piano quite well and did so when we were young. Later, after we took piano lessons, she didn't play the piano at all. She had quite a bit of sheet music and several books of music that I enjoyed playing. Her favorite was *General Pershing's March.* She knew it by heart. That sheet music was worn out in some places and she had taped paper with the words written out, where they were missing. I never was able to play it as well as she could. I still have that sheet music.

We three girls took piano lessons, but we never were very good. Once I played for the Sunday night church service using the piano because I couldn't play the organ.

Another thing we enjoyed doing, this time while riding in the car, this time without Mother because she never played a band instrument, was to "play" our respective parts in band numbers, especially Sousa marches. Daddy played the part of either the tuba or baritone. I played cornet, Donna Belle and Mary Ann played clarinets. We could have used Arlo because he played trombone.

by Mary

In the summer, Saturday night was the social night of the week. The farmers did their chores early. They brought their eggs to town to trade. The men got their haircuts, and the band played. On cool evenings sitting on the bench against the grocery store felt good because the brick had absorbed the heat from the sun. Mother and her friends went to Al's Café and ordered ice cream. When strawberries were in season they brought their own and had sundaes.

The band consisted of anyone who played an instrument - junior high??, high school and adults. The young people were paid a quarter. Daddy played also – maybe a baritone or euphonium – anyway it was big. Mother's cousin -in-law, Harry Voss, played first-chair trumpet. To maintain his embouchure he took his mouthpiece with him to the field, and he would practice with it. Hank Meyer played the bass drum. He had lost some fingers in a farm accident.

When Doreen was in high school, George or Dotha Willis would take her and their children to their home. Doreen would put them to bed and babysat for a quarter an hour (or maybe it was a quarter per night). That summer she earned enough money to buy her red Aplington High School letter sweater for $4.00.

For entertainment, the young kids would walk up one side of Main Street and back the other. By the time they were in high school (maybe junior high) they would walk around the block - very daring - because it was dark and those boys with cars scooped the loop - honked their horn, and sometimes they would "pick up" the girls.

We were given a nickel to spend. Roberta got one, too. We would get a popcorn from the popcorn stand and share it. Then get a popsicle at the Lunch Box and each eat half. At that time you could get a double dip ice cream cone for a nickel (I think). When we were young enough to take naps, Mother would give us our nickel before our naps - as a bribe. One day Donna Belle put her nickel in her mouth and swallowed it. Her punishment was that she had no nickel to spend that night. (Then she had to sit on a potty until the nickel passed.) That was quite a lesson for us. We never put money in our mouth after that.

GIRLS' AND BOYS' 4-H

by Doreen

We girls were each in our local 4-H club, *Washington Peppy Pals*, about six years and the years rotated: foods, clothing, and home furnishings. We took turns preparing demonstrations to present at our meetings which meant we prepared the same thing over and over. One year we had lots of popovers (a light hollow roll made with egg batter). Another demonstration was making jellyrolls (which were tricky because the cake had to be thin, spread with jelly and rolled into a log, keeping the cake in one piece). When Roberta Willis and Mary Ann were preparing their demonstration on making tomato soup without having it curdle, we had a lot of tomato soup.

Donna Belle and I took our demonstration, Renewing and Redoing, first to the county fair and then, after winning there, we took it to the Iowa State Fair. We had panels of different types of wood, showing first how to strip the old finish, then sanding, staining, and finishing the various types of wood. All of the demonstrations ended with a question and answer session. Somehow the judges were impressed if we were able to answer the questions well. At the state fair Aunt Dora was there to ask us a question which we could expound on. The team that won at the state fair that year showed each stage of refinishing from the beginning to the end, all on one old dresser – very impressive. State fair was fun. The 4-H girls and boys lived and ate in dorms. The girls made their 4-H uniforms which we wore to our local meetings and at the county and state fair, except we were told not to wear them on the Midway, where the rides and concessions were. Mother was a Girls' 4-H leader for a number of years.

Doreen and Donna Belle

During World War II there were major scrap drives for the war effort. There were contests about which group could collect the most iron, tin, newspapers, and rubber. Our Girls 4-H usually won the price because we all lived on farms and there was always plenty of junk to recycle. We would take a farm wagon and go to our farms and those of our neighbors and fill it up with old machinery, fencing, feeders, tires, etc. Grandma had saved everything and we emptied the buggy shed of thousands of newspapers.

All four of us belonged to our local Boys' 4-H club, *Washington Successful Farmers,* later *Monroe Successful Farmers,* and still later *Washington Boosters*. We three girls had to belong so that we could show Brown Swiss heifers at the county fair. Donna Belle and I kept ours at Grandma's barn, since all the stalls weren't needed for horses anymore. We only did this in the summer, but that meant we had to go there each day to feed and water them, curry them and lead them on a halter so that we could do it correctly at the Butler County Fair. Milo showed beef cattle which was a year-long project, raising them from a calf till county fair the following August. He had to feed and water his calf morning and afternoon, all during the school year. After the fair the beef calves were auctioned off and often bought by restaurants or sale barns at a good price. Milo and Mary kept their calves in the barn across the road at the hired man's house. During the fair we were there every day to feed and water our animals. Before we "showed" our animals we washed, dried, and curried them. One year I got "Best of Show" for my calf and the Brown Swiss Breeders Association gave me a trophy, a 12" Brown Swiss cow. None of us took our calves to the state fair which was a big deal. Some of the 4-H boys slept in the cattle barn with their calves. When it came time for Milo to "break" his calf, ready for the fair, the calf had gotten quite large and the time had gotten quite short. He first "broke" the calf by hooking the halter rope to the Jeep and leading it that way until the calf was tired out and then Milo led him with the halter.

Both Boys' 4-H and Girls'4-H involved keeping a record book. In the case of the girls we had to keep track of the things we either cooked, baked or canned; things we sewed; or what we did in the way of home furnishings. One year I sewed curtains for Grandma's kitchen but they only went to the county fair. They weren't chosen for the state fair because I hadn't taken off the selvedge. I had just snipped it. One year Mary Ann showed a dinner setting with a theme, complete with table cloth, napkins, center piece, and a place setting. That was the summer I worked at the extension office in Allison because they didn't have a County 4-H coordinator and I was in charge of the Girls' 4-H section at the fair. That year I chaperoned the demonstration team at the state fair wearing my most mature clothes.

When Mary Ann and Roberta demonstrated "Let's make Muffins" at the state fair their leader got too sick to drive home. Since Roberta was 16, the fair officials decided she should drive home. She backed into a car before they got off the fair grounds.

For Boys' 4-H our record book kept track of the cost of the animals, feed, etc. Daddy was the Boys' 4-H leader part of the time when we were members. One of our meetings, just before the county fair, was go to each farm, where we each had to "show" our calf. Daddy demonstrated how to "show" a calf since his major in college was Animal Husbandry and he used to "show" dairy cattle at the Cattle Congress in Waterloo. I think he showed Brown Swiss at the state fair once or twice.

HOW MY HUSBAND-TO-BE MET MY FAMILY

Doreen E. Duba
October 13, 1998

I had gone home for spring break during my freshman year of college. With only a few days off, I had a goal: to make a cape to wear with my formal for the spring dance. Arlo Duba had invited me to go with him. Dubuque, Iowa can still be cold at that time of year so the cape had to be warm. Mother had the solution.

She had a black silk velvet dress from her college years. We planned to use it for the outer layer. Another dress, which was a true flapper dress of heavy black satin, would serve as lining for the cape. It had scalloped embroidery just above the hem. The cost would be small and that was important to Mother. She had been married during the depression.

The project took some skillful designing. The cape was to be fitted at the shoulders, with used shoulder pads, and gored so it would flare out just enough to be stylish. Slits between the first two gores in front, made a place for me to slide my arms through. Though the project sounds daunting, Mother had been a Home Economics major in college and it wasn't as bad as it sounds.

Silk velvet is hard to work with, especially if the material was formerly a dress and not just off a fabric roll. The old dress pieces were laid on the rug, pinned every few inches. This was to ensure that the straight of the fabric was the same for each piece and the pile of the velvet was going in the same direction. Then we laid out the satin lining the same way. Next a pattern, cut from newspaper, was pinned to the fabric.

To get the complete picture of the living room, that late winter afternoon, imagination is needed. Frozen stiff, the morning's wash was brought in from the clothesline and draped on chairs, the banister, lamps and doorknobs to thaw and dry. The floor was covered with pinned material and pattern pieces. As we prepared to cut the first piece of my cape, I looked out the window and saw, of all things, Arlo driving up the lane.

He was on his way back to college from South Dakota and it was only about thirty miles out of his way to stop by and see where I lived. To find us, he stopped at the implement dealer in Aplington knowing we were a John Deere family. However the salesman said that Bruce Eckles was in the back repairing a manure spreader. Arlo went to the back, introduced himself to my father and got the directions to the Eckles' farm. Soon Arlo was on his way out to our house.

Did my father call home to warn us? No, we were on our own! When Arlo knocked, I went to the door to greet him, making sure he couldn't see the mess behind me. Then fortune smiled. The hired man drove up the lane with a tractor and Arlo had to move his car out of the way.

We made tracks! My sister grabbed the laundry (I was concerned about the bras and panties!) and ran upstairs with them. Mother unpinned all the carefully laid-out pieces of fabric and hid them in the sewing closet. I ran to change clothes because I was wearing a *crazy* outfit - a dyed-black man's shirt. When Arlo got back to the door we were ready for him this time!

As I invited Arlo in, the school bus stopped at our house and my five year old brother came in the kitchen door, looked around and asked in a clear voice, "Is this Bert or is this Arlo?"